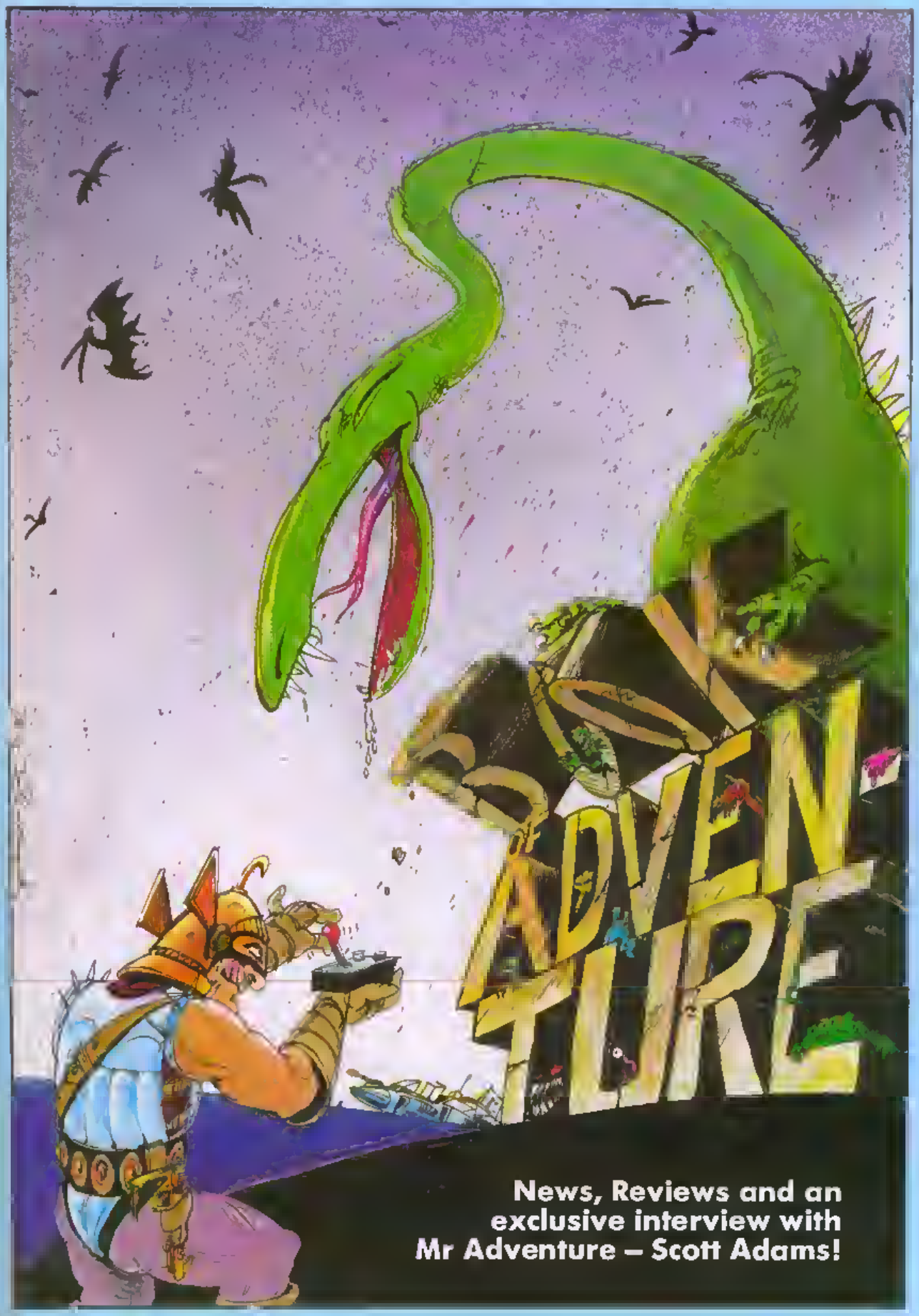
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Mr Adventure – Scott Adams!

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Really original. All Pat has to do is collect parcels whilst avoiding obstacles – like cars, fires, trains, etc. Skill level and Hall of Fame.
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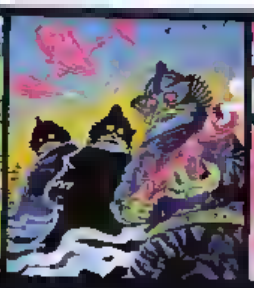

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Catch the bananas, miss the coconuts. Easy? Try it and see. Simple in concept, hilariously entertaining – it'll drive you bananas.
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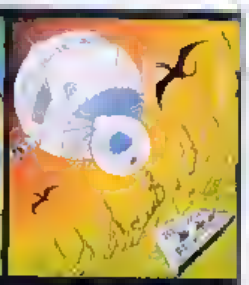

Timequest
A warp-space accident spreads your capsule across time. As you land in each new era, fresh perils face you. A very skillful graphic adventure.
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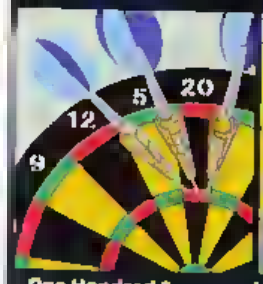

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Great sequel to the best-selling Mad Martha. Hilarious graphic adventure, with hero Henry in sunny Spain, beset by wacky waiters, mad bulls and the wrathful Martha.
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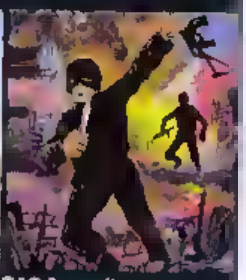

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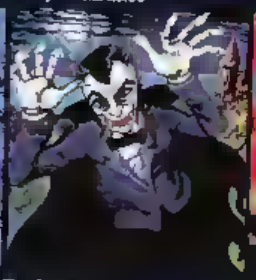

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Find your way round Dracula's domain. A game to get your teeth into!
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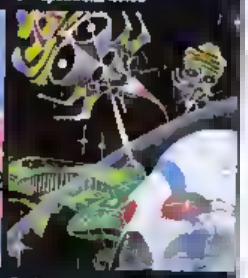

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TAKE CREDIT

Welcome to the Computer & Video Games Adventure special. We've 28 pages dedicated to the subject and a whole host of news, reviews and features.

There's interviews with America's Scott Adams who wrote the famous Adventure International series and Melbourne House's Philip Mitchell who led the team which produced The Hobbit.

We've a competition for those with an active imagination and seven pages devoted to adventure reviews.

A special vote of thanks goes to our regular Adventure columnist Keith Campbell and his Helpline helper Simon Clarke who have helped plan and write much of this supplement. Between them they've solved more adventures than most of you have found packed lunches.

WHO DUNNIT?

Plotted by:
Keith Campbell and Simon Clarke

Planned by:
Terry Pratt, Tim Metcalfe and Eugene Lacey

Featured messages:
Clare Edgeley, Seamus St John, Robert Schifreen

Mapping and layout:
Linda Freeman and Lynda Skerry

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We've mapped out 19 locations, suggested 12 objects and left you with the task of filling in the plot. There's a prize of an Intellivision Games centre with two Dungeons and Dragons cartridges for the lucky winners.

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We tracked down a whole host of new adventures which will be with us in the new year including exclusive news for Spectrum and BBC owners that Scott Adams series is being converted to their machines.

Reviews Introduction . . . 18
There's many a crack of gold in our reviews section and we give you a rundown on our marking system and how to spot the top games.

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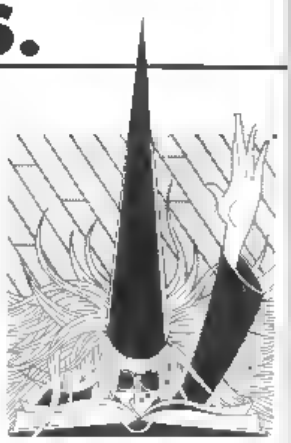

Time Adventures 20
Four adventures which take you back in time including Time Machine from the Mysterious Adventures series.

Sci-Fi Adventures 21
Or four ways to get lost in space in the various futures planned by sci-fi adventure authors.

Graphic Adventures 22
After the Hobbit . . . come Groucho and a few more adventures which give the imagination a helping push.

Fantasy Adventures 23
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Our regular rescue mission for the lost and lonely adventurers.

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Scott Adams of Adventure International is recognised the world over as "Mr Adventure", the man who first introduced this gaming format to microcomputers. We talk to Scott and find out his views on his own games and the future of adventuring.

History of Adventure 11
The first adventures were played on mainframe machines which took up whole walls. Keith Campbell traces the past lives of adventure and wonders where it's all taking us.

Plots and Themes 12
Any adventure is only as good as the storyline behind it. If that's wrong, no amount of clever programming will make it right. Keith Campbell shows you how to decide on a top plot.

Writing Adventures . . 13
When the plot is complete, it only remains to fill in the code. Simon Clarke explains how to write an adventure.

Mapping . . . 16
When you begin an adventure it's all too easy to go around in circles. Simon Clarke takes a professional look at solving adventures by mapping out the locations.

Inglish 17
The Hobbit broke new ground in adventures, allowing complex phrases rather than the usual stilted two word commands. The secret is a special adventure, language called Inglish. Eugene Lacey talks to Philip Mitchell in Australia — the man behind the Hobbit.

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The spirit of adventure has been used in other games ideas which allow the escapist in us to travel imaginary worlds, cheat death and find fortune. Terry Pratt examines some of them.

Video Games Adventures 27
We look at Adventuring on home video games systems. You can delve into dungeons and fight fire breathing dragons.

COMING NEXT MONTH!

Next month in your reader friendly magazine — The Book of Games! Yes, we're bring your 52 fun packed pages of games listings for all the top micros — including the Spectrum, BBC, Vic, Atari, Dragon, Oric, Texas.

HELPLINE

FROM OUR POSTBAG

Many of the letters Simon and Keith receive are read with great interest and amusement. Usually they can only be mentioned briefly in passing. However here, with more space to spare, is a selection to help, amuse and entertain! We give no guarantee whatsoever that using some of these tips will improve your Adventure performance!

HELPFUL HINTS & CRYPTIC CLUES

SANDS OF EGYPT
To light your way magnify a torch beam. You'll have to dig around south of a cliff and north of a start.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK
Go to map room, walk down the yellow line. Don't hang around or you'll be robbed in the black room — head for the bottom RH side of the screen and keep right on.

ZODIAC
Bank on a wire solution reached by ladder. The DIY book is a hint and helps with a key feature in releasing the prisoner.

WIZARD & PRINCESS
There's a bit of Hocus Pocus in crossing the chasm — merge two notes together for the clue. One is found in the hole. To leave an island drink parrot's brew.

To solve an adventure, there are more ways than one. If you can't do it the Adventurer's way, then try the computerist's way!

Dear Sir,
Re the question of how to get through *Pimonio's* green door without losing objects — CHEAT, that's how! Break into the program and type —
LET gate = 7 CONTINUE
You may have to press ENTER to the next prompt, but then you will be in the Cavern of Ivory — objects intact! Try fiddling about with the variable "gate" — you can get anywhere, though sometimes the program gives an error. *Brendan Pollitt, Leswolt, Stranraer*

Keith's reply: We like it, Brendan! I take it this is for Spectrum only, as the BBC doesn't have a CONTINUE?

Some time ago readers were asked how often they saved their games. Here's a tip from New Zealand for all Adventurers —

Dear Mr Campbell,
We have become avid readers of *C&VG* since we bought a BBC four months ago. Your column has always been eagerly read hoping for clues in *Philosopher's Quest*, and although it hasn't rated many mentions I'm delighted to say we're nearly there! With two teenage boys shouting suggestions we finally attained 236 points! Unfortunately the last 14 points are eluding us at the moment.
You asked how often we saved a game at the crucial moment. We found that until we DID start saving games at various points we only managed to get about half way — fatigue, carelessness or having to get a meal always hindered us. It took nine saved games to reach our grand total so to any other Adventurers I would say "save, save, save!".
Judy Sparks, Tourango, New Zealand

Keith's reply: Thanks for writing Judy — I'm somewhat awed by the fact my words are being read all over the world! Hope this next letter may help — but I doubt it!

Of course, we occasionally get letters from the demented

Dear Data-twiddler,
Methinks that this may be useful for Spectrum owners (no comment for fear of starting a war) with Artic's *Adventure A*.
This is how to communicate with the computer behind the wind tunnel. Type 'TYPE HELP" and press ENTER. Good, ain't it!
Wait for it! How to get the coin in the lake. Wear boots. Go lake. You will automatically emerge with the coin. Tony said that the computer and coin were red herrings. Tony is falling down! (I am a novice adventurer).
On to the BEEB and *Philosopher's Quest*. Type the following —
VDU 2 FOR X = TO 300
PROCM(X) NEXT
If it screams 'no such variable' then type 'CTRL-C' then 'P.X' If it says "301" then you've finished, otherwise let us assume that c=X+1, then type —
FOR X=c TO 300
PROCM(X) NEXT
and press instead of return, CTRL-B, then CTRL-M
Cheers. Yes I am a Pimaniac, is this a clue?
John Yeates, Le Boorg, St Clement, Jersey.

Keith's reply: Were you the original artist's model for *Asylum Jahn?*

And here's a discovery to speed up play —

Dear Sir,
While playing *Espionage Island* on my 16k ZX81 I discovered a "new feature" of the game — if you input several commands separated by spaces e.g. W E N (about 6 spaces should do) the computer will input all of them and respond to each after hitting "new line". Although this gives a maximum of about five single letter commands it is an extremely useful feature.
Justin Mussan, Hitchin, Herts

Keith's Reply: Thanks for the tip Justin — amazing what you can do if you experiment, isn't it?

Adventure has followers everywhere, not only in the UK and USA, as this letter testifies —

Dear Mr Campbell,
Having a spare moment and an aerogramme I thought I would write in response to your July article. As I get my issue by surface mail I am some months behind.
I have a TRS-80 with discs, and an Apple with discs.
I wrote down the names of all the Adventures I have, recently, and was mortified to see how few I have ended. I finished *Mission Impossible* and *Strange Odyssey* almost straight off. *Adventureland* and *Pirate* at great length, and am well into *Voodoo Castle*, *The Count*, *Mystery Fun House*, and *Pyramid of Doom*.
I have three Jyym Pearson adventures, *Escape from Traam*, *Earthquake*, and the *Curse of Crawley Manor*. I don't like them all that much, and the hint sheet for *Traam* is USELESS!
I am confronted by a huge black man in a slave's uniform who says, "If you're really from the third planet — who am I?" The clue sheet says BE PERSISTENT WITH FRIENDS. Maybe it will come to me, but some of the clues for parts already solved are useless, so maybe this is too.
Edward McArdle, Ivanhoe, Victoria, Australia

Keith's reply: Thanks for your long letter (not all printed here) from down-under, Edward. Can anyone help with Traam?

Our readers play a big part in making *C&VG*'s adventure pages — they help us to help you by sending in tips and hints to Keith's Helpline — and often get him out of a few tight corners in a sticky Adventure! Here we take a dip into Keith's Helpline files.

Between the issues Keith Campbell and Simon Clarke are both busy typing replies to the many letters they get. So many pour in, that without Simon's help Keith would be buried under a pile of loose paper, in danger of slipping down a hidden grating!

Even so, forgive them if a reply to your letter is late. They try to keep things under control, but every now and again one escapes! So to speed things up, they soon will be using attractive postcards, complete with the Adventure and *C&VG* logos, for the shorter replies.

Now, on with the show! One of our *Helpline* answers comes straight from the horses mouth.

W J Bailey was suffering from *Zodiac* way back in September, you may remember, and the help received from Geoff Phillips has got to be the best around — he wrote the game!

Geoff and I have been corresponding since before he wrote *Zodiac*, and it's nice to see that he is not only still reading *C&VG*, but has got time to help readers out as well!

Thanks also to other readers who helped with this one, notably a detailed solution from Richard Mallory, and other tips from G Whaley, both of whom had to find out the hard way! Or did they? Which is harder, to write an Adventure or solve it?!

G Whaley begs at the same time, for help with the tapestry in the *Onyx Castle adventure*. He seems unable to do with it in the 48k version what he found possible in the 16k game. Anyone had similar problems?

Raiders of the Lost Ark clues for Johnston Barlow, Robert Moss gave us one way to reach the Black Market, and Iain Alexander from Bracknell suggested two! Read the clues, Johnston, you must be able to get there now!

There is a rumour circulating in Ireland that I have a complete solution to *Espionage Island*! Michael Carroll, writing from Wexford, suggests that I might pass it on to him! Have I got such information? Only the reader who sent it in will ever know!

Paul Coppins, thankful for receiving help in the past, has repaid his debt to society! He sent sealed envelopes to be forwarded to the Clipshorns and the Millers, both of whom featured in a recent plea. Thanks a lot Paul, your letters have been sent on!

I don't know the contents of the envelopes, but one was marked 'The Sands of Egypt hold many secrets', and the other, 'Join the notes, the key to see'.

If you're thinking of writing for help — beware! David Anthony wrote on behalf of a group of boys stranded at Lord Wandsworth boarding school in Long Sutton.

It's a matter of pride with them, that once started, an Adventure has to be finished before they set out on another.

The one in question, *Planet of Death*, was boring them to death. Can't say I blame you, lads!

'If you can't help we'll have to do something really interesting like reading a roll of wallpaper,' wrote David. I did help — and fed a length of wallpaper through my printer to take the reply! Two birds with one stone!

My Editor (bow, scrape) was not visibly amused when he heard. 'Tut tut, Keith, what will the readership think we're playing at?' So please, readers, don't tempt me!

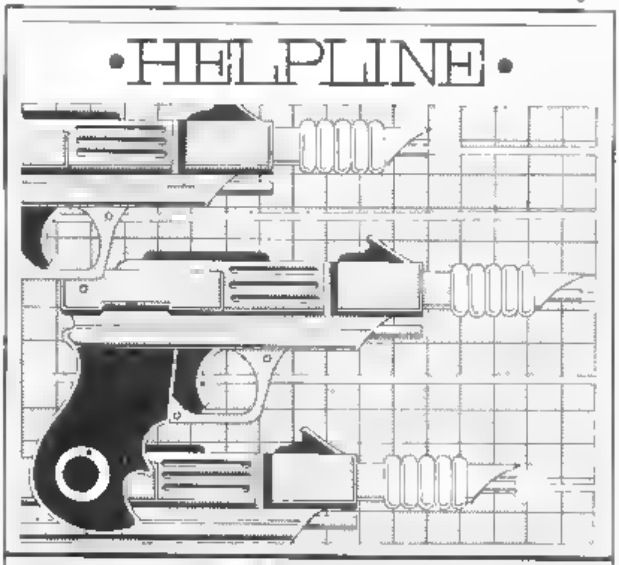
Escape From Traam is a game that I can't seem to get hold of for my TRS-80. However, following Stephen Banner's request for a difficult clue, I am beginning to feel I know the game very well!

From Mike and Sue Moseley of Macclesfield:

'The Frond is quite nice,
But dig my advice,
And your cup may spill over right now.
So here's a good lead,
But make haste indeed,
Don't alter your course anyhow'

Mike and Sue are themselves desperate to know how to open the Old Safe.

Problems, tips, and adventure chit-chat are always welcomed at Keith Campbell's Adventure Helpline, *Computer & Video Games*, Durrant House, 8 Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5JB. Simon and I are both here to try and help each other! Please write to us — but not all at the same time!



HELPLINE INPUT

Help required in this section — can any obliging reader came clean about the following?

***Velnor's lair*, for Andrew Kennedy of North Harrow. He has reached the waterfall after killing Medusa and can get no further. And for Craig Lee of Bournemouth, who can't cross the crocodile infested river.**

***Knight's Quest* for John Powell of Worksop. Having negotiated quite a chunk of the game he is now totally stuck in a dark tunnel without a light.**

***Shamus Case II* for R. T. Britwell of Billericay. Stuck in Room 21. What a place to get stuck! Help him somebody, please!**

***Ulysses and the Golden Fleece* for Alison Matulko of Lymm, Cheshire. She is struggling to open the jewel encrusted box. This sounds familiar! If it is similar to a certain jewel-encrusted egg, then you may never open it!**

HELPLINE INDEX REGISTER

Here are some recent achievements by *C&VG* Adventurers. If you think you have a high score or record performance in an Adventure, then write to *Helpline*, and tell us!

M Broszka of Bolton has reached 957 *Karma* points, beating our previous high-score of 887 totted up by Duncan Wood. Is this a record?

Ian Parker of Gentleshaw near Rugeley thinks he might have topped the poll with 4000 *Inca Curse* points the first time he played it! I wonder if he corrected the spelling on his way through? *Inca Curse* has the most dreadful spelling in any Adventure I have ever seen.

Perhaps I am a little lacking with *Hobbit* clues. I admit it is a game I have played but not completed. Perhaps this shows. I met Arthur Milgram of Melbourne House recently, and detected a slightly Hobbit-hurt feeling emanating from him. He could tell!

Hobbit clues are very difficult to give, as the game changes subtly every time. Those who have gone the full course and have quoted the congratulatory final message, are Mark Crisell of Great Totham, Stuart Steen of Rayleigh, and Andrew Kennedy of North Harrow.

None have yet scored 100%, but all have their own theory about going back out there and !

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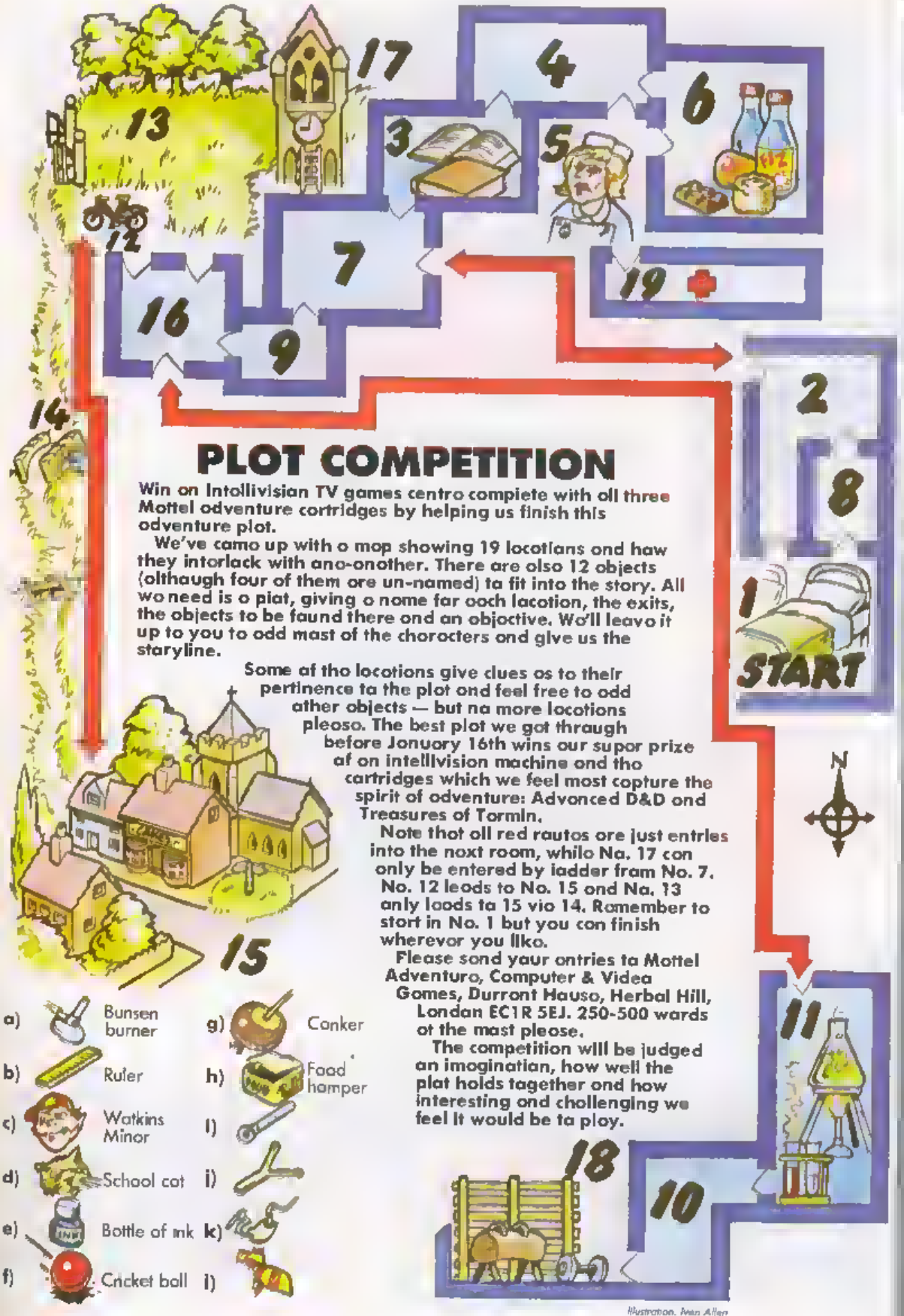


PLOT COMPETITION

Win an Intellivision TV games centre complete with all three Mattel adventure cartridges by helping us finish this adventure plot.

We've came up with a map showing 19 locations and how they interlock with one-another. There are also 12 objects (although four of them are un-named) to fit into the story. All we need is a plot, giving a name for each location, the exits, the objects to be found there and an objective. We'll leave it up to you to add most of the characters and give us the storyline.

Some of the locations give clues as to their pertinence to the plot and feel free to add other objects — but no more locations please. The best plot we get through before January 16th wins our super prize of an intellivision machine and the cartridges which we feel most capture the spirit of adventure: Advanced D&D and Treasures of Tormin.

Note that all red routes are just entries into the next room, while No. 17 can only be entered by ladder from No. 7. No. 12 leads to No. 15 and No. 13 only leads to 15 via 14. Remember to start in No. 1 but you can finish wherever you like.

Please send your entries to Mattel Adventure, Computer & Video Games, Durrant House, Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5EJ. 250-500 words at the most please.

The competition will be judged on imagination, how well the plot holds together and how interesting and challenging we feel it would be to play.

a) Bunsen burner
b) Ruler
c) Watkins Minor
d) School cat
e) Bottle of ink
f) Cricket ball
g) Conker
h) Food hamper
i)
k)
l)

Illustration: Ivan Allen

•NEWS•

THE ISLAND

Red Herrings are definitely out of water in this adventure — you'll encounter them all over the place!

You play the part of the only survivor of a plane crash — fortunately the plane managed to crash-land on a tiny island situated in a vast expanse of ocean, so at least you were saved from a watery death.

Finding a way off the island presents a problem as it appears quite deserted so you set off to explore. The island is small but still manages to include about 140 different locations. All of these must be visited before you can solve the mystery and escape from this deserted prison and make your way back to civilisation.

On the island are four mazes which must be negotiated and in each one you'll find treasure, clues and objects, all of which may be of help. However, there is only one way off the island so take care not to be led astray as many of the "helpful" clues and objects are nothing more than red herrings!

The adventure is also set against time and the top adventurer will want to make good his escape in the fastest possible time.

The Island is available from Manchester-based Crystal Computing for the Spectrum 48k at £6.50 and can be used with the Currah Speech Synthesiser.

O LEVEL CAPER

Anarchy is rife in 'O' Level Caper as you fight against a band of evil teachers in order to prevent an exam disaster.

The aim of this bizarre game is to track down some original 'O' Level papers which have been substituted with fake ones by some wicked teachers, in collusion with a professor at Oxford University. Should you fail you'll find yourself sitting an exam which is so difficult that everyone will fail!

This is another Phoenix action/adventure game, where you must first play an arcade-type game to win through to the adventure proper. On completion of each level you will be given code words and various clues which will help solve the caper.

In order to discover the loading code for the adventure cassette you need to complete at least four of the eight skill levels on the action cassette. However, some dummy clues are slipped in and you have to decide which are the red herrings.

In the action game you wage a constant battle against the terrible tutors until you've managed to complete enough skill levels to arm yourself with the code to start the adventure.

Using the necessary clues in the adventure, you make your way to Oxford and fight your way into the University past bands of corrupt teachers. Once you've tracked down the original papers and swapped them with the fake ones you can sit the exam with a sigh of relief in the knowledge that you and several thousand others are at least doing the right paper.

The 'O' Level Caper comes as two cassettes and is available from Middlesex-based Phoenix Software for the Vic 20 with 8K expansion at £9.99.

MOUNTAINS OF KET

A venomous furry creature is stuck fast to your neck throughout the Assassin Bug adventure.

Edgar is the unlikely name of the bug and his presence on your neck is the Lords of Ket's insurance policy, designed to stop you escaping while you undertake the deadly quest they have set you.

Framed for murder and awaiting a grisly death, these Lords give you one last chance to escape your fate. You must find the Temple of Vran and kill its evil priests, who send their murderous acolytes to raid Ket.

You start off in a village at the foot of the Mountain of Ket. In your purse are some gold coins which can be used to barter for the supplies you might need on your journey. On entering the gaping blackness of the mountain, the huge doors swing shut behind you with a crash! The only way out being through the maze of tunnels winding up, down and through the heart of the mountain.

In your travels, treasure can be found glinting in the darkness — but don't leave it lying around as there are rats lurking who'll whip it and hide it again.

With about 70 different locations inside the mountain you'll meet both friends and enemies to help or hinder you — watch out for the gambling ogre who is out to win your supplies.

The Mountains of Ket is the first of a trilogy of text adventures. On completion of each adventure a code word will be revealed and the first person to complete all three will receive a prize by sending all three code words to Incentive.

The Mountains of Ket is available from Reading-based Incentive Software for the Spectrum 48k at £5.50, while the remaining two adventures will be released early next year.

MIDWINTER

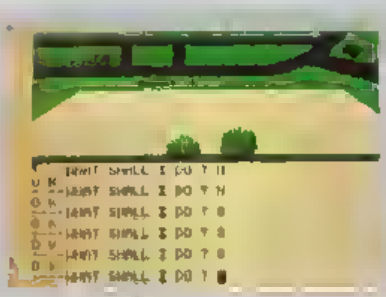
The earth is in the grips of another Ice Age and you've got only 12 days to find the device which will melt the ice.

Before the second Ice Age, the polar ice-cap started to melt causing the oceans to rise and creating extensive flooding. To reverse this process, a group of prominent scientists built a machine to bring everything back to normal.

But the process went too far, plunging the earth into a frozen wasteland where nothing will grow. What was once lush and verdant withered, the population dwindled and the people lost hope.

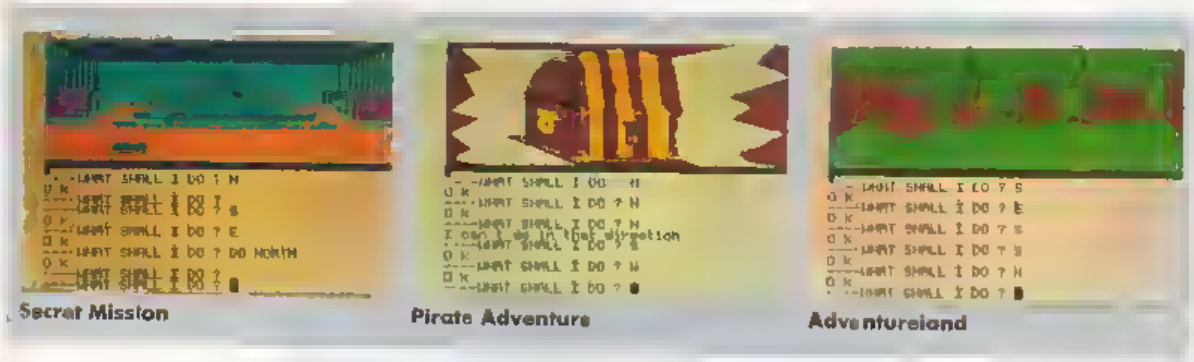
One day while looking through your attic you come across some documents explaining how the earth got into such a mess. Armed with this

Adventureland



Pirate Adventure

Secret Mission



Secret Mission | Pirate Adventure | Adventureland

valuable information, you set out to find the machine and reverse the process to restore the earth to a semblance of normality.

You've only 12 days in which to save the earth and the adventure leads you to many strange places and encounters before it's solved.

Midwinter is one of three new titles to be added to Digital Fantasia's extensive series of Mysterious Adventures and is available for the BBC as a text adventure and the Spectrum which is a graphical version for £9.95.

The other two adventures are Wax Works and After The Fire. In the former you have to find your way out of a wax works factory in which all the exhibits become alive. Fight your way past Jaws IV the shark, tackle the manic mountaineer and try to out-smart Robin Hood.

After The Fire is a real horror story. You have survived a nuclear holocaust and realising you're the only person who hasn't fallen victim to radiation sickness and fall-out in your area, you set off on a gruesome journey to find and join the few remaining survivors of the holocaust.

Wax Works and After The Fire are also available from Digital Fantasia for the BBC and Spectrum at £9.95 and can be played with the Currah Speech Synthesiser.

SCOTT'S GAMES

Santa's bringing a great Christmas present over from the States for all you adventure freaks.

Calisto Computing, the UK agents for Adventure International have recently obtained the rights to produce Scott Adams adventure games for the BBC, Electron and Spectrum. This is in addition to the Atari 400/800 and TRS-80 which they already cover.

The production and conversion of these popular games are already in hand with four of the 12 titles scheduled to be released before Christmas. The remaining eight are due to appear in the New Year.

The first titles to be released are Adventureland, Pirate Adventure, Secret Mission and Voodoo Castle. The Spectrum will carry the first two games and all four will be available for the BBC and Electron.

In the New Year the remaining games will be released for all three micros and the full set includes: The Count, Strange Odyssey, Mystery Funhouse, Pyramid of Doom, Ghost Town, Savage Island Parts I & II and Golden Voyage.

All the BBC and Electron adventures will be text-only versions retailing for £7.95 but the Spectrum games are graphical and priced at £9.95.

And finally, Calisto are already looking into the future with the aim of extending their range still further. During the next few months they will be looking seriously at the new Elan microcomputer, Dragon and possibly the Oric to increase the range of machines Adam's Adventure series is available on.

•NEWS•

FISHY BUSINESS

Dan Diamond has returned again in his attempt to complete the mystery begun by a cryptic note.

Having received a note to the effect of "Come, you're our only hope" in Franklin's Tomb, Dan, the futuristic detective, sets out on his strange quest to find the authors of the note and to help them in their dilemma.

Following a series of clues, his weird journey takes him into Lost in Space, the second part of the trilogy where he finds himself in a derelict space craft hovering somewhere in the depths of the galaxy. He must find his way round the ship and land it safely on a particular planet!

At last, in the third adventure in the series, Fishy Business, Dan has miraculously found the very planet he had to land on.

Descending from the space craft to survey the lie of the land he finds, to his horror, that he's set down on a small sandy outcrop surrounded by water. Taking a deep breath and holding his nose he dives in to search the murky waters in the last part of his quest.

Fishy Business is an underwater adventure set in a sea kingdom, populated by Mermaids and Mermen. There are many articles which Dan should collect to help him in his mission, but beware — some could be little more than red herrings!

Travelling through caverns and grottos in his search for clues, Dan has many strange encounters. He may come across a lift-room which will transport him into the depths.

Fishy Business is a text adventure and can be played individually or as one of a series with Franklin's Tomb and Lost in Space. All three adventures are available from Salamander Software of Sussex at £9.95. At present Fishy Business is available only for the Dragon but by mid-February should also be available for the BBC and Oric.

PUFFINS

Read the book, play the game and immerse yourself in a gripping adventure.

Puffin Books have entered the software market with four new adventures, each accompanied by a book to help the happy adventurer to the conclusion of the plot.

Escape from Arkaran, Besieged! and Into the Empire comprise a space trilogy with the accompanying books outlining the story of the adventure.

In the Warlock of Firetop Mountain, you brave the dark secrets of the mountain to find the Warlock's treasure using the book to pick up clues and map your journey.

The trilogy is available from leading retail outlets for the 16/48k Spectrum at £4.95 while The Warlock of Firetop Mountain, for the 48k Spectrum, is priced at £6.95.

MR. ADVENTURE

Keith Campbell's Adventure Helpline gets most pleas from players lost in the *Mystery Fun House*, trying to undertake a *Mission Impossible* or stranded in a *Pyramid of Doom*. They all have one thing in common, trying to combat the devious mind of Scott Adams — the mind that lies behind 12 classic adventures. No Adventure supplement would be complete without a word from the man whose adventures have produced more curses and commendations than any others on the market. So Terry Pratt phoned to interview Scott at his Adventure International complex in Florida.

To the microcomputer games enthusiast, Scott Adams is Mr Adventure. It was his first program, Adventureland, which introduced many an Adventure addict to the delights and frustrations of this popular game format.

That first offering was five years ago and has been followed by 12 titles from Scott. Games like *Ghost Town, The Count, Mystery Fun House* and *Pirate Adventure* are recognised among the classic adventures to emanate from Scott's keyboard.

His fans include the dedicated adventurer who will not dream of asking for HELP, those who like being immersed in a story and even arcade gamers who want to challenge their wits as well as their co-ordination.

The sign of a successful Adventure and the strength of Scott's, is that the player can lose himself completely in the action. Scott strives to spark the imaginations of his players.

"The key element of an adventure is to make sure it relates to the people who play it. The writer uses his imagination to generate an image in the player's minds," he says.

But it is also important to believe that you can solve the Adventure. Scott claims: "Players want a chance to use their minds. To be presented with a problem knowing that a solution exists and that they can overcome the problems eventually.

"It is important that enough clues are placed in the adventure for people to make a logical progression to the solution."

So how does Scott approach writing an Adventure? "I get a basic theme like the old west, science fiction or fantasy and then fill in the location, say a space ship or an old ghost town.

"Next I work on the geography, rooms and castles, whatever would fit. And then comes the purpose of the adventure, is it a treasure or mission oriented game? That's when the real imagination comes in, drawing in the landscape.

"An adventure can take anything from one to six weeks, it depends how well everything fits together — I once wrote one in a week."

The plotting is important to Scott and it shows when he's asked which of his own adventures are his favourites: "I get asked this question a lot. I usually like the one I've finished most recently, the best. But of those currently available, *The Count* and *Ghost Town* are the two I usually choose. They have the best plotting in my opinion."

Scott was a professional computer programmer long before he discovered Adventures. It was while working in a Florida company's programming department that he was introduced to the "original adventure" *Colossal Caves* by Crowther and Woods on the company's mainframe computer.

After solving it in a week of staying late at the office he wrote Adventureland on a TRS-80 at home.

In 1979 he set up a retail store called the Adventure International Computer Centre and that has now expanded to become a 40 employee business with a large range of software.

"It's not only adventures. Our product range also includes a strong arcade side. There are around 250 titles in the range. Games like *Preppie* and *Sea Dragon* as well as adventure and also business packages."

The Adventure International service does not stop at selling an adventure. "We get an awful lot of feedback from players in difficulties asking for help. One of our best sellers is our Hints Book.

"We help them over the tough hurdles, not by giving them the answers but by providing extra hints and clues."

Scott himself doesn't tackle other people's adventures anymore: "I try to stay away from other people's Adventures. So I'm not likely to steal their ideas. I like to remain untainted."

And he still finds he has a font of ideas springing forth: "Yes we've got two new Adventures coming out shortly which I'm very excited about. I still enjoy writing them."

Adventure International is also producing graphic versions of Scott's games and he sees this as the way Adventuring will go. "It's moving away from text Adventures. As computer graphics get more sophisticated, so Adventures with graphics became more sophisticated. Graphic Adventures now tend to outsell text Adventures.

"Graphics make an extra dimension available and can add to the player's involvement."

He doesn't feel that Adventures are best left purely to people's imaginations: "All of our new games use graphics wherever possible. A text only Adventure is like a newspaper which has no pictures."

Does Scott have any plans to visit his many fans in Britain? "Yes, I'm hoping to come over in 1984. It's just a question of finding the time."

We wait with bated breath!

HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

Adventure games go back a long way — all the way to those giant forerunners of the present day home computers — the mighty Mainframes. Keith Campbell has been delving back into the mists of time to bring you a potted history of Adventuring. He looks at the founding fathers of Adventure gaming — and then into his crystal ball to discover the shape of Adventures to come.

Illustration: Shirley Barker

Fantasy games take many forms. The imagination is almost limitless in its capacity to create make-believe worlds to allow the mind to experience excitement beyond its reach in reality

We built a ship upon the stairs
All made of the back-bedroom chairs,
And filled it full of sofa pillows
To go a-sailing on the billows.

We took a saw and several nails,
And water in the nursery pails;
And Tom said, 'Let us also take
An apple and a slice of cake';
Which was enough for Tom and me
To go a-sailing on, till tea.

Imagine you are in a dark dungeon. A flaming torch fixed to the wall casts a flickering light towards a passage — your only way out. In the shadows you see the outline of a dwarf brandishing an axe . . All eyes gaze at the Dungeon Master, to discover what will happen next

Crowther and Woods could hardly have guessed what they were starting when, in those dark days before the advent of the micro, they took the fantasy game a step further by writing an Adventure on a large mainframe computer

This was the *Colossal Cave* which was written in Fortran and was played on large installations — and still is — by bank clerks and students alike

No longer had a dungeon master to be present — his place was taken by a keyboard, and printer or screen.

Some time later the first popular home micro-computers appeared. A young man called Scott Adams noticed a promising new one called 'TRS-80' and purchased it, to see how it compared with his home-brewed system. He had been fascinated by *Colossal Cave* and wondered — would it be possible to implement a similar game on a small computer with limited memory?

His attempt resulted in *Adventureland*, which he wrote in Basic, in 1978 and followed with *Pirate's Cove*

A friend of Scott's, Lance Micklus, tried to persuade him that the fast response of machine code was needed to make these games widely acceptable Scott was not convinced, but took a crash course in machine code programming, and then spent a year developing a system that would enable him to write machine code adventures with relative ease

He converted *Adventureland* and *Pirate*, and gave birth not only to his own classic series, putting micro-adventures firmly on the map, but also to the company of which he is now president — Adventure International.

Incidentally, *Adventureland* and *Pirate* were the only two of his series available on a Pet, in Basic

The TRS-80 was, at that time, America's most popular micro, followed by the Apple, and Scott's games were originally converted to both the Apple, and a machine little heard of these days, the Exidy Sorceror.

The heyday of the TRS-80 as a popular games computer, was now, sadly, drawing to a close Although a powerful machine for serious enthusiasts, and with a wealth of games software to its elbow, two events combined to change the face of Adventure.

The U.S. passed a law limiting radio interference from home computers The popularly priced Model I failed to comply, and was phased out of production by Radio Shack in favour of a compatible but more expensive Model III.

At about the same time there came a new generation of home micros — including the Atari, Vic-20, Sinclair Spectrum and BBC.

All offered colour graphics, and all cheaper, some much cheaper than the earlier TRS-80, Apple and Pet. Owning a home micro was now a viable prospect for millions, rather than a relative handful of dedicated enthusiasts

Scott's games were converted for the Vic and Atari, but now with a vast market thirsting for adventures, new adventure software proliferated

Cheaper memory meant still more computers were arriving on the scene — including the Dragon and Oric The memory size of a standard configuration was now double or treble the 16k of the older micros. Cheaper hardware meant more disc drive owners

Two new possibilities for Adventure gaming were now opened up, graphical adventures and disc-based adventures.

Disc offered the same possibilities as a mainframe game — a vast adventure map and a verbosity of text, a quality lacking in a 16k adventure whose replies necessarily tended to be terse and cryptic.

Now a screenful of detail could entertain the player, giving him the added problem of sifting out the vital from the irrelevant and sometimes zany information presented.

Graphical adventures enabled pictures to be displayed as well as descriptions of the rooms or location Scott's original series bounded back as SAGAs, (Scott Adams Graphical Adventures).

However, there is little doubt that the adventure "purist" is strictly a text adventurer, preferring to allow his imagination to go to work to form the images, rather than be shown how he should picture the scene.

The range of quality extends from excellent to inferior This is, I suspect, due in part to the early adventures being written for the sheer challenge and enjoyment of writing them Now, however, software is big business, and more likely to be commissioned than inspired

We have had five years of micro Adventures. How will the successor to this article read five years hence? Watch out for the multi-remote-player fully-interactive real-time hi-res animated colour graphical hi-fi stereo voice-simulating adventure!

Adventure brings out the little boy or little girl in all of us The adventure world of make-believe is perhaps epitomized by Robert Louis Stevenson's *"A Good Play"*

We sailed along for days and days,
And had the very best of plays,
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,
So there was no-one left but me

State-of-the-art it might be But imagination always was and always will be

THE heat from the glowing stream of lava slowly but inexorably flowing down the chasm was beginning to bother me

I had been bitten on arms, face, back — they were spreading all over me. They itched I scratched. I wished I could get AWAY from this place.

And suddenly I was, I must have passed out, for the next thing I remember was a medicated hospital smell

I found myself lying on a cot in a strange bare room, clothed in a white robe My eager fingers were no longer able to soothe the wild itching — for my own protection I had been put in a straight-jacket Whaash! Whoever brought me here must have been careless with a cigarette end, for now my straight-jacket was on fire! As it burnt through I struggled free, stamped it out, and headed for the door. Locked! But the fools had left the key on the other side and I was out like a shot

I escaped and found a doctor. Or at least, I thought he was a doctor He examined me all over, giggling as he did so. He scratched one of my bites in an unreachable place 'That any better?' he asked.

'Nasty little things, chiggers' and thrusting a note in my hand, he was gone I read the writing on it 'GO AND DIG' One of the words was obscured by a purple coloured slime A bell rang somewhere. I ran

Into the forest, running further from that dread place, the barking of the vicious dog they had sent after me grew louder

In my desperation to escape him, I stumbled upon a tree root and fell Deep in a pile of leaves I noticed something special. I was lying across a series of metal bars covering a shaft of some sort. I pulled frantically but they wouldn't give The barking now almost on top of me, I upped and ran, quite certain that I'd never make it

Luck must have been on my side Feeling in my pockets, I found something special I lobbed the hand-grenade at the dog Leaves rained down everywhere, mixed with ears, paws, a tail, a collar and an unlit lamp

It must have been a direct hit, for the bars were there no more Wasting no more time, I clambered down the iron ladder fixed to the side of the shaft. It's dangerous to move in the dark, I know, but I was desperate.

And down there — well, you'd never believe it It was like a whole town. My stomach was grumbling, and after a couple of sneakers for hors d'oeuvres, raddled with heartburn, I headed for the cafe down the street for steak and eggs — sunnyside up

The egg that I broke over the griddle looked ordinary enough — apart from the hinges and jewel encrusted shell that is — but there was its sunny side looking for all the world like a baby clockwork dragon, its emerald scales decidedly bruised It had ceased to be due to my clumsy attempt at breaking the shell If it had gone to meet its maker, then I should have followed I'd have ordered ten grass, and would have been set up for life

Instead I ran blindly down the street, into the first entronceway I came to 'Tickets please' squawked an old crone behind the counter I gave her my Access bill That was not all. She went 'Wheeee' and I went on in to the funfair.

I pulled red levers and blue levers and yellow levers I found myself in a shooting gallery

Suddenly everything vibrated, and I was in a sandy desert I examined my surroundings. I noticed something special — a spade.

I went east and dug I went west and dug I went north and dug. I went south and dug I threw my compass away and dug. I stumbled around blindly under the searing sun. There were so many damned holes around I fell down one Down, down, down .

I was in some sort of alien space ship, unable to move, trapped in a force field A small nomad appeared

Calliope music was playing We danced Still trapped, we danced again. The force field suddenly collapsed. Just as well — I was beginning to find the nomad quite cute I shot him.

In front of me was a control panel with three buttons, numbered 1, 2 and 3. I paced up and down, desperately trying to work out the firing sequence for the space-ship's engines.

I tripped over a dustbin on legs It had a green furry lid I lifted it, felt inside and found a string of old beads. Nothing special. I counted down. We took off

We were circling an island. In alarm, I noticed we were on fire I grabbed a handy parachute, and headed for the hatch. I was falling .

PLOTS THEMES

Well, just how do Adventurers get their ideas for their trips into the realms of fantasy? Keith Campbell has been attempting to unravel some ideas for plots and themes to give you an insight into the Adventure writer's mind. And judging by his dream(-)like vision, they are a pretty weird bunch!

'Woke up, here's a nice hot cup of tea!' A lost a kindly face. 'What are you doing on the floor, you must have fallen out of bed!'

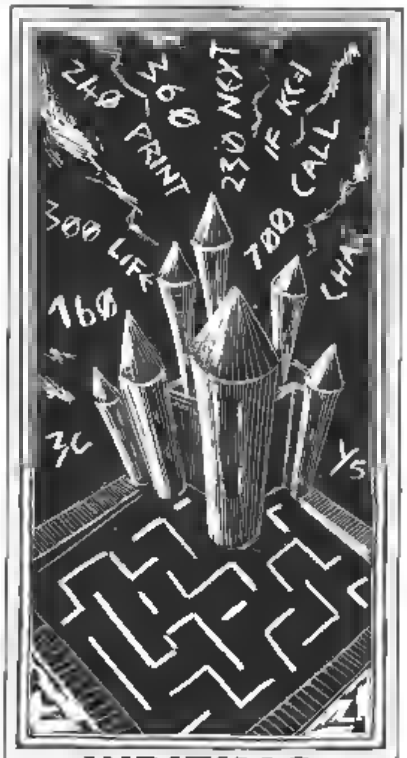
I groaned. 'Why did you wake me up? I was going to make it with the native woman at last!' I was distinctly peeved. She was not amused. 'You're supposed to give her the beads — you know that!'

'But I'd got it all sussed out — I had this spare grenade to lob at her husband — it would have been different this time!'

'Do you know, you were playing on those four computers of yours till 2 o'clock? Adventure mad, that's what you are! Now drink this and get up — you know you've got ten reviews to write, and the deadline's next week . . .'

'OK. But get that spade by the bed and pop out into the garden and dig up some mud, will you? These bites are killing me!' She looked at the pile by the bed. A fat cigar, box of crackers, small statue of a blue ox, an unshod horse (smelling of stale emulsion), wet tennis leaves, an iron glove, precision crafted frisbee, cuddly toy — nothing special.

'But . . . these weren't here when you came to bed . . .' Her adventure was over. She passed out.



WRITING ADVENTURES

Adventurers will face the darkest dungeons without a qualm, tackle the fiercest monsters and steal treasures from under the noses of the most awesome wizards but ask them to *write* an adventure

Writing an adventure is not as difficult as people believe. In fact, it can be a darn sight easier than some of these programs are to play and solve particularly if you are a newcomer to Adventuring. And writing a good adventure can be just as rewarding. Here, Simon Clarke gives a clear, step-by-step guide as to how to tackle adventure writing and leads would-be adventure writers to the golden gates of the magic castle where their dreams can become a reality.

THE most important part of any adventure is worked out far away from the computer keyboard.

There are three steps to every adventure, but its success depends on the plot capturing the player's imagination and leading him deeper and deeper into the game.

When a good plot has been established, the writer must lay out his locations in map form with routes, objects and characters which bring the plot to life.

Mapping and plots are covered elsewhere in this supplement and this article will take adventure-writing on from there.

But before you rush to the keyboard there's some more work to do with pen and paper. A location table must be drawn up to translate that map into a more accessible form.

Each location is given a number and a description. The possible exits from it will be noted down and location numbers of all feasible destinations noted.

Objects are treated in a similar way with a note of the location in which they can be found and a comment on whether or not they can be TAKEn.

You will need a good working knowledge of your machine and, as adventures use a lot of string-handling techniques, there may be some commands which you are not too familiar with, so keep the manual handy.

The two main areas people have most difficulty with are storing the data and recognising commands.

Storing the Data (objects and locations)

Storing location and object details is simplicity itself. The main thing to keep in mind is the format in which you store your information. The best way to approach it is to build up your DATA statements, with one location or object per line. This line will also contain details of where you can go and what you may find there. This format should follow the lines of:

Location, N,E,S,W,U,D, and as many object fields as you wish (but if any are not used they must still be set-up).

Where N to D are the numbers of the locations where these directions will take you. This numbers the sequence in which the DATA statements are listed and read. Using this system, all you need to do if movement is not allowed in a certain direction is to set those directions to 0, then in your command section of program you merely have to include a statement to the effect of:

IF LOC=0 THEN LET RESPONSE$="You cannot go in THAT direction". A similar format can be used for the objects.

Command recognition

This is probably the most difficult part of coding an Adventure, and is very dependent on the type of machine you are using. With simple machines like the ZX81, there is very little you can do apart from using the whole input string. But on more powerful machines, commands such as LEFT$, RIGHT$, MID$ and LEN become a godsend.

The most widely used system is one of looking at the first three letters of each word only, and that is the system I use. Using whatever commands you have at your disposal, getting the first three letters of the player's command is simple, but getting the next words letters is a little more complicated. First, find out how many characters there are in the input string. Now, take this number and character by character work backwards along the string until you find a space, now add one to your string count, and starting from this position, pick-up your three letters.

The reason for working backwards instead of forwards, is to help the player. Many people find it difficult to adhere to a strict two word command and type in lines like "Get the sword".

This system will cope with commands like this, where the computer would otherwise respond with, "I don't understand THE". Little touches like this make the game more of a pleasure to play.

In anticipating the player's responses always try and give him plenty of scope to use the obvious words. Obscure verbs can be the main reason why players give up on adventures.

The best way to test out the game, is to ask a friend to play it and make notes of all the areas in the game where he knows the sort of word he needs to use but cannot find the exact one you had hoped for.

Then seriously consider changing the word or adding the first one the friend came up with. Adventures are often judged on their vocabulary and the words which the machine itself uses yet cannot understand.

Spectrum owners can invent their own adventures using the excellent new Quill adventure program generator.

The Quill is made by Gilsoft which is based in Barry, South Glamorgan. You can buy a copy from selected computer outlets or direct from Gilsoft by mail or phone 0466 736369. If you're an adventure fan, then you'll find it worth every penny of the £14.95 price tag.

Using The Quill lets a computer user create a playable Adventure game. You do not need to know anything about programming since The Quill will teach a novice something about writing programs as he/she works through the simple language which the Adventure interpreter understands.

We're always looking for new and original ideas for games listings in *Computer & Video Games* — and Adventures are among our favourites. You don't even have to produce a listing — just a good plot idea or theme — and we'll pass it on to one of our team of expert programmers to see what they can do with it.

As Simon has said in his article above, Adventurers are often the last people you'll find actually writing a game. So if you are new to the art of Adventuring, perhaps you can bring a new idea or a fresh approach to the world of dungeons, demons and fire-breathing dragons.

If you have come up with an original idea, drop us a line and there could just be some Adventure software on hand for the best ideas we receive. Write to *Computer & Video Games, Adventure Writing Contest, Durrant House, Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5EJ.*

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A superb 16k adventure in which you must locate your time machine to return to the present. Plus a collection of mind stimulating puzzles

THE QUILL is a major new utility written in machine code which allows even the novice programmer to produce high-speed machine code adventures of superior quality in many (valuable) at the moment without any knowledge of machine code whatsoever. Using a menu selection system you may create, edit and locations, describe them and connect routes between them. You may then fill them with objects and problems of your choice. Having tested your adventure you may alter and experiment with any section with the greatest of ease. A part finished adventure may be saved to tape for later completion. When you have done so *THE QUILL* will allow you to produce a copy of your adventure which will run independently of the main *QUILL* editor so that you may give copies away to your friends.

THE QUILL is provided with a detailed tutorial manual which covers every aspect of its use in writing adventures. For the 48K Spectrum

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LEVEL 9 ADVENTURES

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These games are very much bigger than normal adventures yet cost £9.90 each. The number after each name is an estimate of how many weeks an average player may take to solve the game – for your information.

1 COLOSSAL ADVENTURE (4 weeks)
The classic mainframe game. Adventure with all the original puzzles plus 70 extra rooms.

2 ADVENTURE QUEST (4 weeks)
An epic puzzle journey through Middle Earth.

3. DUNGEON ADVENTURE (8 weeks)
Over 100 puzzles to solve and 40 treasures to find.

4 SNOWBALL (2 weeks)
Save the interstar freezer Snowball 9 in a huge space adventure with over 7000 locations.

Note: a lot of players take much longer than the times above. Don't be discouraged if you are one of them!

Snowball was too new to have been reviewed when this ad was placed but here is a sample from the superb independent reviews of our first three adventures.

The Level 9 Adventures are superbly designed and programmed, the contents first rate. The implementation of Colossal Cave is nothing short of brilliant. rush out and buy it. While you're at it, buy their others too. Simply smashing!
–SOFT September 83

Of the programs reviewed here, the only one that is wholly admirable is Level 9's Colossal Adventure.
– Your Computer, September 83

I found Dungeon exceedingly well planned and written with a fast response. There are well over 200 locations and the descriptions are both lengthy and interesting.
– Computer & Video Games September 83

This has to be the bargain of the year. If adventures are your game then this is your adventure.
Home Computing Weekly 30th August 83

There are three excellent adventures on offer from Level 9. The descriptions are so good that few players could fail to be ensnared by the realism of the mythical worlds where they are the hero or heroine. great fun to play.
– Which Micro? August 83

Price £9.90 each inclusive

Level 9 adventures are available from good computer shops or mail-order from us at no extra charge. Please send order or SAE for catalogue describing your micro to:

LEVEL 9 COMPUTING
Dept G, 229 Hughenden Road
High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 5PG

MAPPING

Those first few locations of any adventure can vanish in a blurr of hastily grabbed objects, half-remembered descriptions and casual investigation.

If you keep a pen and paper by you and take the time to make notes as you go, the adventure will take shape much faster.

Dead ends are easier to spot, new routes to much-visited rooms suggest themselves and it is easier to tackle second time around after you take that first break.

MANY keen adventurers spend as much time jotting down the ins and outs of their new world, as they do exploring it

These are the cartographers of their age who consider map-making to be the best part of the game and who will happily take hours of painstaking work producing their diagrams and charting new territory.

I am not among their number, but when I am reviewing a game or if I get completely stuck then the pen and paper comes out and a solution is sought.

Because I am not the keenest of map makers, I have formulated a system which is easy to make and can be followed by any beginner.

The most important thing to remember is to produce a key which will be meaningful after several days away from the adventure. There's no point returning to the adventure, staring at the map and wondering: "Now what did I mean there?"

For my system you require some different coloured pens, lots of squared graph paper and a counter or 1p piece to show your position.

The first task is to set the key down on the paper, give each colour pen a different job to do and make a note. My system is shown in figure 1.

Then draw yourself a compass heading and get the adventure underway on the screen

At this point, it is impossible to say where the adventure will lead, it could be that the start is at the westernmost end of the locations and that all routes will lead east from here.

Figure 1

Colour	Type
Black	Description
Red	Danger or Treasure
Green	Other Characters
Blue	Objects
Pink	Indirect routes (i.e. Doors)

Things in brackets are hidden

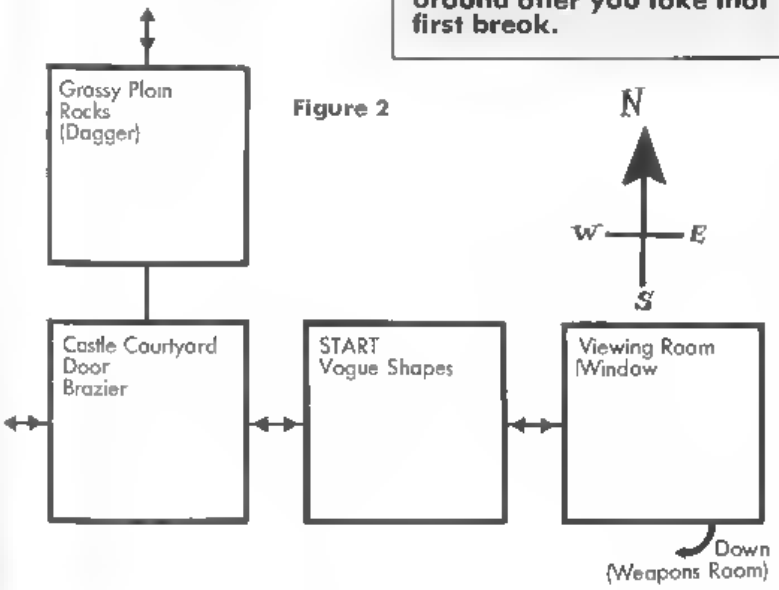


Figure 2

This cannot be helped, the only place to start is in the centre of the graph paper and see where it leads.

Begin with a square box, large enough to write all the necessary data in and label it "start".

Put in the title of this location. Sometimes the adventure will make this easy by giving a location name: The Green Room, Rats' Cave or Wapwort's Cabin In other cases, you will have to come up with something from the room's description to remind yourself of where you are, e.g. the room in which you find the sword will be the sword room.

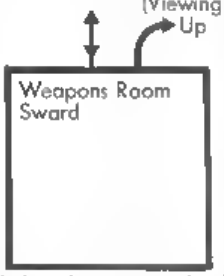
More difficult are the featureless rooms in a maze or an area where you seem to be travelling among identical locations These are usually just one location which the programmer has disguised to make it seem larger

The most common are areas of forest The programmer hasn't wasted chunks of code in producing a seemingly endless forest; he has one location labelled "Forest" and then all but one of the exits leads back to that location. It is usually quite safe to do the same.

Then mark the visible exits from the location at the relevant compass points, add arrows to each route and draw in the location it leads to. As soon as you have arrived, try returning by the same route and add a double arrow if this is possible

In the colours you've laid out in your key, add the objects, people dangers and treasures of the room. Objects which are hidden should be enclosed in brackets

Figure 3



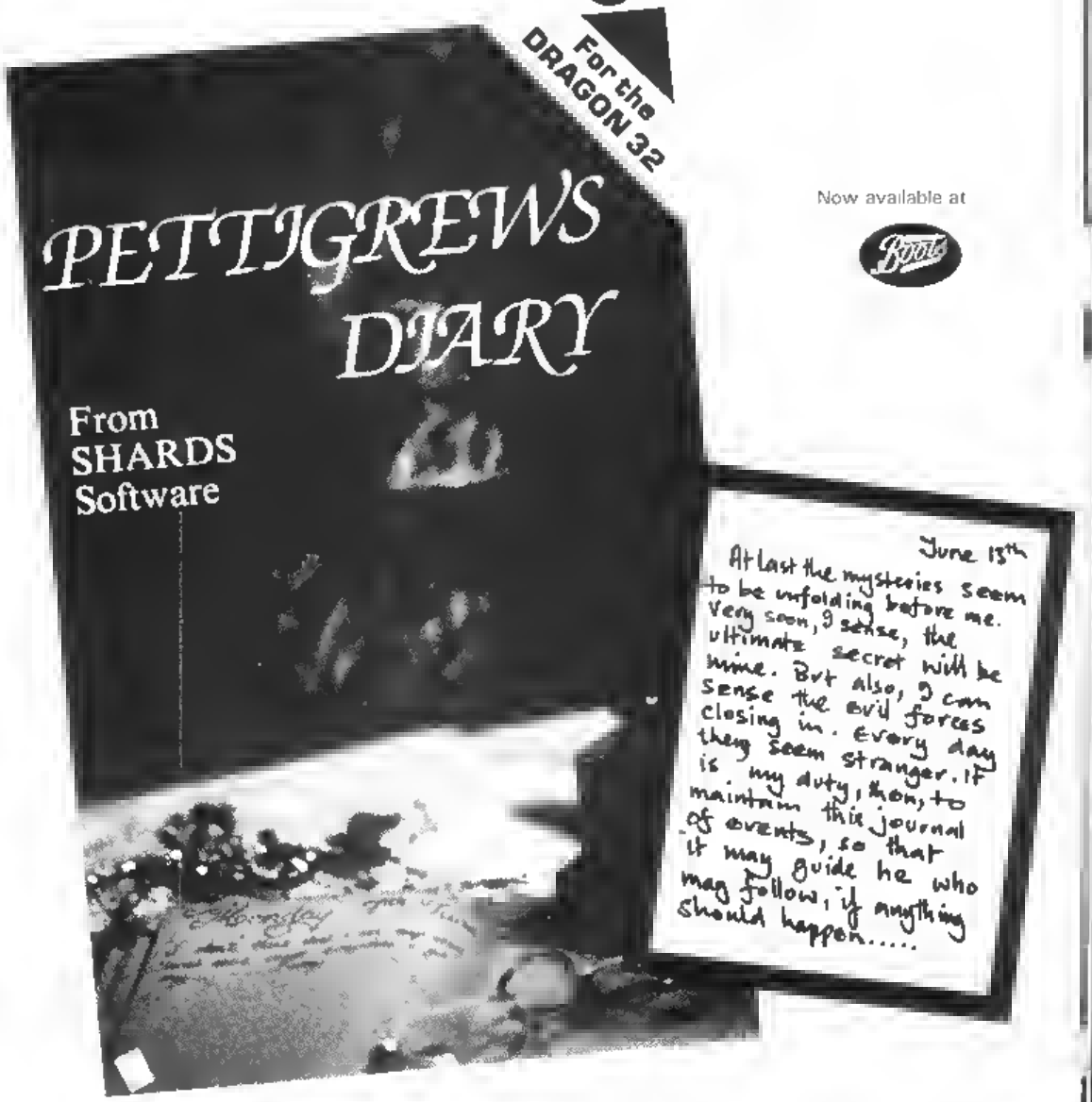
Some exits from rooms will only be possible under certain circumstances or by manipulating a door, jumping a river and so on These are "indirect routes" and should be marked in a different colour.

Maps can start to become messy when there is a change of level. This should be dealt with on a separate sheet of paper and marked as shown in figures two and three

A final word on mazes, some of these may not seem to make sense when mapped. As with forests, the programmer can take liberties with a maze layout to add to your confusion Routes you had planned carefully may suddenly change There's not much you can do other than curse and start again.

These mazes apart, this system should help you to solve even the most complex of games.

The ultimate adventure for the Dragon 32



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INGLISH LANGUAGE

The biggest hit adventure game of 1983 was Philip Mitchell's Hobbit on the Spectrum and now also available on BBC, Oric and Commodore 64.

So when Melbourne House told us he was working on a second, bigger and better adventure we thought you'd like to know a little bit about it.

In a marathon telephone interview with the man who has sold a hundred thousand cassettes we bring you the low down on 'down-under's' hottest programmer.

All about Inglish — the language that makes the Hobbit and Sherlock Holmes tick.

PHILIP Mitchell joined Melbourne House two and a half years ago after studying for a computer science degree at the local university.

Whilst studying for his degree, he was already working part-time on a project which was the brain child of Melbourne's ideas man and managing director, Alfred Milgrom.

The project was the Hobbit — which was to take another two years to complete but was due to make a name for Mitchell, Milgram and Melbourne House — not to mention, a small fortune in the process.

Mitchell modestly refuses to steal all the credit for the Hobbit, "I should say at the start that it was a team effort. Alfred assembled a team... myself and another programmer called Veronica Megher, a linguistics expert, Stuart Richie, who designed the special adventure language Inglish and an artist who produced the illustrations for the graphics in the game."

Apart from having one of the best fantasy adventures ever written to draw upon, what really made the Hobbit unique was the way the game's characters roamed around the different locations. This made the game a little different every time it was played as the player never knew who might turn up in a particular place

The Hobbit was also the first adventure game where you didn't have to rely on reproducing the exact two words the programmer had in mind. This is Inglish which allows for longer phrases than the usual adventures, with more than one idea contained within them. Despite this capability, Mitchell is often surprised at the limited sentences which people employ when playing the game.

"I think they have become used to adventures where you can only use one word commands — and tend to play the Hobbit in the same way. this is a pity because the program can cope with quite long sentences"

Inglish is driven by three connected parts of the program- a language analyser which interprets what the player has input, a data base which contains all the accepted words in the program, and an applicator which applies commands to the game.

The analyser takes every command through a chain of checks before producing a response. First every command goes to the "passer" to make sure that the word is in the game's dictionary

Then it goes to the syntax checker which decides whether or not the command makes logical sense within the context of the game. It does this by classifying commands and words as either actions or objects — and then passing them on to a "semantic analyser" which decides if the command makes sense according to what it already knows.

More simply, it checks if words exist; checks that they make sense according to the rules of grammer as defined by the program, and checks that they make sense in the game itself.

Inglish has been refined and improved to add even greater conversation between player and characters in Melbourne House's next big game — Sherlock Holmes.

This extra word power has been made the basis of the game where you — playing the part of the gentleman sleuth — have to carefully question suspects, and convince other characters about your theory as to who did it.

Illustration Shirley Barker

The model for the new form of Inglish is an artificial intelligence program called Eliza, whose applications have so far been confined to the research laboratory. In experiments carried out with the program, where people have talked to Eliza from another room, they often refused to believe that they were talking to a computer

Although Melbourne House is not claiming anything like this degree of communication power for Sherlock Holmes, the buzz phrase of "artificial intelligence" is already being used in its promotional literature

The new game will not be packed with a copy of one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's books but every effort has been made to check the authenticity and consistency of actions in the game with that of the characters in the books

The story line for the who dunnit adventure game is being produced by a Sherlock Holmes expert, Sarah Byrnes, who is writing it in novel format, drawing together elements of all of the stories rather than basing it on any particular one

Holmes' trusty companion Dr Watson features prominently, giving advice which is not always helpful. And the stubborn unimaginative Scotland Yard Police Inspector, Lestrade is also on hand. It is Lestrade that Holmes must convince that his suspicions are correct.

This is achieved in conversations where the good inspector will do his best to fault Holmes' logic and demand further proofs.

The scene is naturally turn-of-the-century London and the case is murder with clues, suspects and witnesses in good measure. The game is played in two parts. First you must persuade Lestrade that your proof is unassailable and then the villain must be apprehended

As with the Hobbit, Sherlock Holmes will be available on the 48K Spectrum first and will be converted to other computers with sufficient memory later

Sherlock Holmes will have more limited graphics than the Hobbit due to the huge amount of memory taken up by the game's advanced communication system — though Mitchell did say that it will definitely contain "some" graphics.

One thing is for sure when Sherlock Holmes goes on sale in "late January early February" 1984, there is going to be a long queue of Hobbit fans armed with £ notes ready and willing to buy Philip Mitchell's new game

The day to be there is January 15th and you'll need £14.95 to make the purchase.

Next month Keith Campbell has twenty copies of Sherlock Holmes to give away in his Adventure Column. Don't miss our Super Sleuths competition and keep a check on all the latest adventure games news and reviews

•REVIEWS•

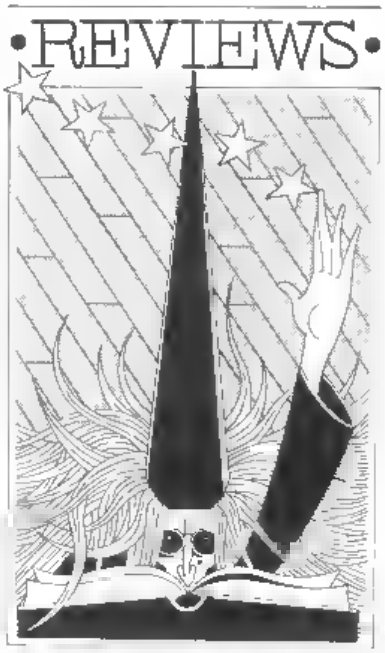


illustration: Ray Ingram

INTRO

Our Adventurers, Keith Campbell and Simon Clarke, have been huddled over their computers — fighting dragons, finding hidden treasure and braving all the dangers of the universe during the past few weeks, in a quest to discover the ultimate Adventure game.

We've let them loose on the next few pages to allow them to bring you their views on the Adventures they've been testing. We've divided these Adventures into five sections — beginning with Graphic Adventures.

These are the new generation of Adventure games which move away from simple text displays on the screen and allow the computer to draw pictures of the different locations in which the Adventurers will find themselves.

We also look at those baffling games written by Mr Adventure himself, Scott Adams — who gets a whole section to himself!

Then there's Adventures with a Time theme, Fantasy Adventures, and Adventures with a Science Fiction background.

Keith has come up with a special rating system for the games reviewed — and we'll let him explain how this works. Over to you, Keith.

It has not been the practice in the past for various scale ratings to be applied to Adventure reviews on the Adventure pages.

This is because Adventure, more than any other type of game, is very much a question of personal taste.

However, with so many games covered here, we thought some sort of comparison would be helpful, and we came up with the following factors, all awarded points out of five.

LOGIC/DIFFICULTY

This is *not* a measure of how difficult the game is — it is easy to make a game almost impossible if the clues for logical deduction are not there!

This factor is a measure of the combination of how logical the problems are to solve with the clues and background given.

If a game is easy, then not too much logic would be needed, so if it all fits together, then perhaps a rating of five might be given. If it is difficult, there would need to be enough subtle clues to enable the player to judge the problems as fair, for a rating of five to be awarded. To find out how easy or difficult it is, you will have to read the review.

VOCABULARY

This is not only a measure of the extent of the vocabulary understood by the game, but also of its completeness.

A small vocabulary may get high marks as long as all the obvious words occurring to the player are recognised.

For example, if a location was described as "by a river", and the word "river" was not recognised, even if the game understood a million words, the vocabulary rating would suffer.

PLOT/THEME

This is a rating of originality and plausibility of the scenario of the game. And how well the whole thing fits together.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PETTIGREW'S DIARY

Pride of place in this supplement for the most original and entertaining Adventure must go to *Pettigrew's Diary* from Shards Software.

Three chapters make up this mystery story. Each must be solved (in theory, at least) to enter the next. Clues unearthed as you progress are needed later in the game.

Chapter 1 — The Burning Farmhouse. This is a cross between a text and arcade Adventure. You move around a plan of the house, opening doors and examining the contents — which includes the dying Pettigrew. His last words display faintly and vanish. 'Find my ', and he's a gonner.

All the while you're battling to beat a fire spreading graphically and randomly in real time. Nothing too special, but next there's —

Chapter 2 — London Frolics. Here is a full length text adventure with the most original display I have seen.

Explore London, travel the tube (choice of Circle, Central and Piccadilly lines). Gamble in an amusement arcade — real skill is required to win cash. Earn more cash working in a cafe, or cleaning toilets. Dodge traffic at the Embankment — skill is needed to dash when the lights are in your favour. Browse a book shop in Notting Hill. Visit the Hotel Euroconk. Avoid Eddie the Crook.

The computer's replies move letter by letter from right to left, bleeping as they go, inside a frame. Cash, date and time are displayed and automatically updated — all in real-time. I left the game to snatch a meal, and returned to find a new message 'You haven't slept for so long, you'll collapse!'.

One reply sequence was a classic. Running continuously across and off the screen: 'She leads you into an old house into a dimly lit room. She turns on the light and takes off her coat to reveal ' but you'll have to play it for the revelation!

Chapter 3 — European Trek. We're now off to Paris, and there is Pierre up the Eiffel Tower about to jump. You must talk him down so he can give you valuable information.

You are told the words, and must type them in undisplayed, fast and accurately to get him to climb down a level. If you fail, he will climb higher. Each time, you have a different and longer message to type, so it becomes a speed typing and memory test.

Next we move to Germany, and have a little puzzle to solve in Stuttgart, to correctly identify one of two barbers. And so on.

Three separate programs, self loading from the previous one, and within them, mini games in their own right! It's got to be value for money!

Pettigrew's Diary
From Shards Software for Dragon at £7.95

Logic/Difficulty	**5**
Vocabulary	**4**
Plot/Theme	**5**

Keith Campbell

HALLS OF THINGS

Halls of the Things has an impressive cassette inlay illustration but it does not live up to its claim to be "The first fully animated adventure" for the Sinclair Spectrum.

It is just *not* an adventure! Where 'Valhalla' is truly an animated graphical adventure, Halls of the Things is an arcade maze game, and the adventure enthusiast (who usually has little interest in arcade games), will be disappointed.

You control a figure of a little man, and drive him around a maze using four keys representing Left, Right, Up and Down. The maze has seven levels, and is randomly generated each time you play.

You can open and close doors with "O" and "C", and "keep" or "drop" objects by coming alongside and typing

"K" or "D". Various spells can be invoked with their initials — Fireball, Lightning and Heal. Arrows can be shot with an "A", in the direction of the Spectrum's arrow keys.

The maze "pages" quickly if you drive your man over the screen boundary, and is scattered with objects. Some of them (although looking very much like half-empty milk bottles) actually contain elixir.

The 'Things' dart around the maze in the form of purple triangles, and can zap you extremely quickly — especially if your fingers are unused to fumbling around on little squares of rubber.

Once zapped it is sudden death. You are out of the game, but can restart after a short delay, while the maze resets.

Quite an effective arcade-style maze game, but I wonder — do the people who bill such games as "Adventures" really know what they're talking about, or are they just trying to muscle in on both ends of the market?

Halls of the Things
From Crystal for 48k
Spectrum at £7.50

Logic/Difficulty	**N/A**
Vocabulary	**0**
Plot/Theme	**1**

Keith Campbell

GROUCHO

Fat cigars are Groucho's currency in Automata's sequel to *Pimania*. You can gamble them, buy clues with them, and get robbed of them! That fast talking member of the Marx brothers has been transferred to the Spectrum.

Groucho is big. He takes five minutes to load — but why worry when you can sit and watch his cigar and eyebrows twitching? After he has loaded he treats you to an obligatory three minutes of graphics.

The format of *Groucho* is different from that of *Pimania*, and comes across as a series of zany puzzles and joky insults, interspersed with tunes and set against a background of clever and colourful animated pictures.

Groucho invites you to guess the identity of a Hollywood star. If you can do so by June 1st, you stand a chance of winning yourself a trip for two by Concorde and QE2, to meet the star.

To do this you must collect clues to the star's identity. These are gained by guessing the names of other stars, from clues purchased at an ever increasing price of fat cigars.

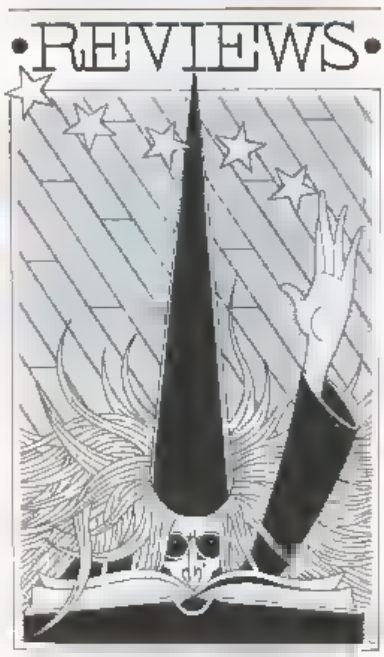
Cigars can be come by in the Casino and other places, if you're lucky! On the other hand, the Piman might come along and 'bum' a few off you.

Groucho sometimes annoys me. He uses some witty phrases like 'Of all the words in the game, you had to choose them!' And them. And them. Wears a bit thin after a while.

I guessed one of the stars to be

Pettigrew's Diary

Groucha



GRAPHICS

CHARLES CHAPLIN. Not so. 'THAT'S NOT A NAME — IT'S AN INSULT! I WAS THINKING OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN' didn't go down very well!

And I can't travel. My attempts are at best ignored, at worst, for some reason, clear the program from memory — like some other commands — and that means another eight minute wait. Together with the slow response time, playing is a laborious business.

Having said that, *Groucho* is entertaining and addictive enough to be played again and again. And like Pimania, he comes complete with a pop song — 'Groucha' — on the flip side, this time performed by Lady Clair Sinclive and the Pimen. Will the Piman soon be seen live on Top of the Pops? Will Clive Sinclair get to number one? Wait and see!

Groucho
From Automata for 48k
Spectrum at £10

Logic/Difficulty	**5**
Vocabulary	**2**
Plot/Theme	**5**

Keith Campbell

SMUGGLERS COVE

What do you do when you come across an Adventure which speaks in a strange country dialect? You delve into your Cornish tourist phrase book that's what! *Smuggler's Cove* has a nice turn of Cornish phraseology to entertain even the most jaded Adventurer.

'OK' is a common Adventure response to a command successfully obeyed. *Smugglers Cove*, set in a cave on the Cornish coast, replies 'Right me dear'. Other fairly standard replies get similar treatment.

These replies made a welcome change, and persuaded me to explore the cave into which I'd fallen, and from which I was trying to escape complete with Blackbeard's treasure.

Smuggler's Cove should not be confused with Pirate's Cove. It is an orthodox type of Adventure, complete with monochrome hi-res drawings of each location occupying the top lines of the display. Unlike most graphic Adventures, these pictures display quickly, and the overall time between commands is faster than a lot of games without graphics.

Another thing about the pictures — they change in accordance with the state of play. For example, in a cave with a ledge both described and clearly visible, I threw a rope with such skill that it hooked onto the ledge and was left hanging to the ground. This change was reflected in the picture.

On the minus side are disappointing omissions in vocabulary, and a barrel containing — no, not rum! — spiked shoes of all things! -

I kept slipping off the ledge, and being offered a chance of reincarnation. Unfortunately my stars were always in the wrong house!

If you can stand the dialect, and the shocking pink border, not a bad, but fairly mediocre game for your Spectrum, me luvlies! It comes in a standard cassette box, with attractive inlay containing full instructions and background story.

Smugglers Cove
From Quicksilva for 48k
Spectrum at £6.95

Logic/Difficulty	**3**
Vocabulary	**2**
Plot/Theme	**3**

Keith Campbell

continued on page 24

FEASIBILITY EXPERIMENT

"You have been chosen as the ultimate Warrior and you are the only hope of an almost extinct alien race".

And so it begins. You wander around in search of lost treasure.

On the way you will be presented with the alien's version of some of the most testing challenges from planet Earth's history (Dinosaurs, Robots, Lions, Roman Guards, and Gladiators) and you must overcome these dangers to recover the treasure.

This is another in the Mysterious Adventure series and uses the familiar split-screen format.

The game is quite difficult and takes quite some time to solve — days rather than hours — but isn't too difficult to map and it is fun to play and is guaranteed to hold your interest for some time to come.

The version played was for the TRS-80/Genie range, but many other versions are available, including ones for the Commodore 64, BBC, Spectrum and soon, Atari. Check ads for details.

Feasibility Experiment
From Digital Fantasia for Commodore 64, BBC, TRS-80/Genie, Spectrum and Atari. Price varies depending on the machine.

Logic/Difficulty	**4**
Vocabulary	**4**
Plot/theme	**4**

Simon Clarke

TIME MACHINE

The fourth dimension is opened up through an H. G. Wells-type time machine which can explore the past and the future.

But before the mysteries of time travel are revealed to you in Time Machine you must find the marvellous piece of equipment which gives the game its title.

The adventure starts with you lost in a swamp and you must tread very carefully to get to the old manor house. Getting in isn't too difficult, providing you have a slightly criminal mind.

Once inside, it is up to you to gather all the necessary clues for you to begin your task. It would spoil the game if I told you exactly what you have to do, but suffice to say that you must use the somewhat unreliable Time Machine to flit back and forth in order to complete your task.

I spent many enjoyable hours playing this game, and found it quite easy to get on with — once I'd got the hang of that damn machine. But I do have to make a confession: that I couldn't quite finish this game.

There is one point in the program where I have just drawn a complete blank. So Digital Fantasia, for the sake of my sanity, how do you break the generator?

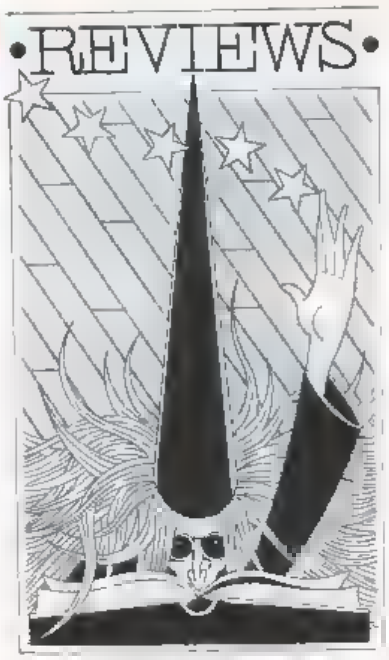
Although I didn't finish the game, I think that I got far enough through it to say that it is excellent.

Time Machine
From Digital Fantasia for BBC, Commodore 64, Spectrum Atari and Dragon 32. Various prices depending on micro.

Logic/Difficulty	**5**
Vocabulary	**5**
Plot/Theme	**4**

Simon Clarke

•REVIEWS•



TIME

Time Traveller

TIME TRAVELLER

"An Adventure in time", is the legend below the title on the video-cassette sized case housing a computer cassette from Sulis Software.

The world "Adventure" on a software package always sends the blood coursing through my veins, so I picked up the package and loaded into my BBC Model B.

Some very effective arcade-type sound and visual effects accompany what is essentially a piece of educational software. The idea is that you answer a series of multiple-choice questions on each of 5 ages through history, to enable you to pass through a "time-gate" and return to the 20th century. After each series of questions, the player must negotiate a hazardous maze with a theme based on the age he is in.

Unfortunately, (perhaps), not having a joystick, I used the alternative keyboard method of negotiating the mazes, and found the response too sluggish.

I did a lot better with the questions, and even learnt that the Beaker People were not, (as I had always thought), children from the pre-Snatcher era of free school milk, but a tribe originating from Spain in the Bronze age.

Quite a nifty little historical educational game — but not, as described baldly on the package, an Adventure! This is a pity, for I suspect that accurate historical Adventures could well find success in the educational market.

Time Traveller
Sulis Software, from John Wiley & Sons at £9.95 for BBC 'B', 48k Spectrum, Dragon and Commodore 64.

Logic/Difficulty	**N/A**
Vocabulary	**0**
Plot/theme	**0**

Keith Campbell

FATHER TIME

I sat and waited. And waited. And waited. I lent across the desk and picked up the cassette box and studied it for the fourth time. I stared at the screen in front of me to confirm that the game was loading in properly. It seemed to be. My goodness — or words to that effect — I thought, it can't be that long! Can it?

Oh yes it can, for this game is BIG! I don't think that it leaves much of your 32K memory left.

The game itself involves the player in a search for Old Father Time's hourglass and staff, and this task you must complete before the Sands of Time run out. You start the game in a forest with the ground covered in leaves. Haven't I heard this somewhere before?

After getting into the cave and through the large door, the going started to get quite tough, and I think that this is the only game I have come across that actually gets more difficult the further you get into it — very good for beginners and experienced Cave-Crawlers alike. This is as much as I can tell you at the moment because, well, you see, I er, sort of, like, didn't manage to er, finish it. Sorry!

This game can be wholeheartedly recommended. It is well thought-out, imaginative, fun, witty, challenging and well packaged. It costs £9.50 and is available from Bug-Byte and their dealers for the BBC A or B 32K.

Logic / Difficulty	**5**
Vocabulary	**5**
Plot	**5**

PEN AND DARK

Turning a book into an adventure proved a successful formula for the Hobbit and a new company Mosaic has set out to capitalise on it

The Pen and the Dark is one of the first book/adventures to come out of the Mosaic stable and it carries out its task very effectively.

The story is one of the many in the book *The Unorthodox Engineers*, and whether you buy this game or not, the book itself is well worth reading! The main idea of the story is that you must investigate a strange area of "something" that has appeared that seems to have no logical explanation.

As I was lucky enough to get hold of a pre-production copy of the BBC and Tandy versions, I did not have a copy of the book that comes with the game to hand, so I therefore was playing the game for about a week before the copy of the book I ordered arrived from W H Smith's.

I found the game a little hard going without the book, but once I had it, it made everything a lot clearer.

One thing which really endeared me to the game was at one point I was at a loss for what to do next. So I read-up on the section of the story I was in and thought I had the answer. With baited breath I typed in the necessary sentence, and the computer responded with "Anticipating the plot will not improve it."

This is the first venture into software by Mosaic, and if the rest of their software comes up to this standard then they should be very successful.

Pen and the Dark will be available in January with more versions, including a Commodore 64 one.

The Pen and the Dark
From Mosaic for BBC, TRS-80/ Genie and Spectrum. Price is not yet known.

Logic/Difficulty	**4**
Vocabulary	**3**
Plot/Theme	**5**

LOST IN SPACE

Lost in Space is the sequel to *Franklin's Tomb* from Salamander Software. It comes complete with illustrated case file, which gives you graphics without using valuable memory space, and without slowing down the response.

Here, Dan Diamond finds himself transmitted from Franklin's Stargate to a spaceship.

His, or rather, your world is very limited unless you can deduce that one of the rooms is a lift. Pure guesswork is required, as there's not a hint that the ship even has a lift! Once discovered, try operating it!

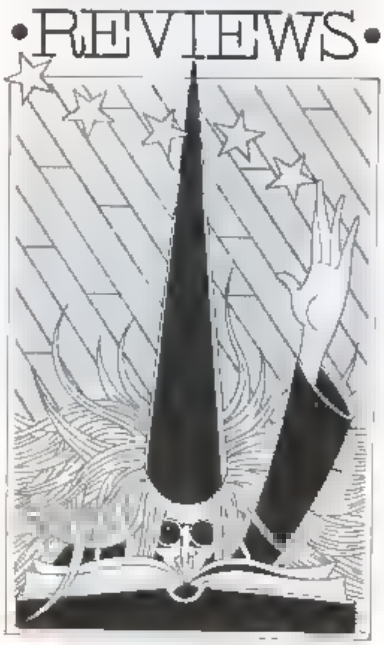
Having learnt how to move from one level to another, I slowly explored the ship. This exploration was very slow, due to constant interruption from security robots who whisked me off to a location that takes about 10 moves to escape.

As far as I could tell, these arrests were random, and there was no way to prevent them until you learnt how to control the ship.

Dan Diamond, if he can negotiate the space ship, is in for a surprise or two. Ever tried Intergalactic Laxative? Powerful stuff — where's the laundry?

I enjoy a difficult Adventure, providing progress is possible using deduction and thought. *Lost in Space* is difficult, but some crucial steps are left to guesswork, and there is no HELP to give one a clue. An Adventure is easily made difficult if the obscure is not accompanied by a cryptic clue. After all, interpreting the clues or puzzles makes the game.

I spoke to Salamander Software, and requested a hint sheet. I was too early — the game had only just been released and the hint sheet was not quite ready. However, Salamander were most helpful with verbal clues, and I learnt about some disappointing red herrings.



SCI-FI

"Be quiet — know more" is the motto of Sussex University — just that! There, and I had thought this was one of the puzzle-clues!

I played *Lost in Space* on a Dragon, and the response was sluggish to reasonable. As the BBC version was not due out until the 16th December, Salamander kindly let me have a BBC version of *Franklin's Tomb* (which I had only played on a Dragon), so that I could compare responses between the micros. Not surprisingly the Beeb's was almost instantaneous, and the frustrations of the robots in *Lost in Space* could, I suspect, be more tolerable on this micro.

Frankly, Franklin, I was disappointed in you this time — but your game is still far better than a lot of other Adventures on the market. I await Fishy Business with hope!

Lost in Space
From Salamander Software for Dragon, BBC 'B' and Oric at £9.95

Logic/Difficulty	**3**
Vocabulary	**3**
Plot/Theme	**4**

Keith Campbell

SPACE ADVENTURE

Many Adventures are not what they seem. Some games described as Adventures are not quite what I would call a real out and out Adventure — but a mutant form of the art.

With the new Adventure format branching out into new areas, not least the graphic style Adventure mentioned earlier in this review section, perhaps there should be a standard industry code for all Adventure games.

For example a text only, classic style adventure game would be marked with a large T somewhere on the packaging. A maze type Adventure would be branded with a big M and so on.

This would make life easier for Adventure addicts everywhere — and games reviewers too! Enough of the great debate.

If such a code existed, Space Adventure from Pro Software, would rate code A for Arcade-type!

Space Adventure is for the BBC, and can be played with control keys or joystick. The object is to collect four power crystals from a large alien spaceship. The difficulty is, that these are locked away, and require four keys to open the rooms containing them.

Therein lies the snag. To get to the keys, you have to battle against Androids guarding the ship. You have phaser and blaster with which to zap them, but periodically may need to recharge these, plus your life support system, by using lesser power crystals scattered throughout the ship.

Space Adventure makes reasonable use of the Beeb's sound capability, and adequate use of its graphics.

Even as an Arcade game I found it difficult to play. It seemed to me illogical that my blaster was always pointing in the direction in which I was moving — therefore I had to start moving on a different course to alter my aim.

Space Adventure
From Virgin Games for BBC at £7.95

Logic Difficulty	**N/A**
Vocabulary	**N/A**
Plot/Theme	**2**

Keith Campbell

continued on page 24

SAVAGE ISLAND II

Of all the text-only Adventures ever written, *Savage Island Part 2* must surely take the prize for the most difficult!

It is not one of those difficult illogical games — it is difficult AND logical. I think!

You need to solve *Savage Island Part 1* to gain the password into part 2, or at least, persuade someone who has to part with the key. But believe me — if your Adventuring is not up to completing part 1, get some more practice in before attempting this one!

You're in dead trouble right from the start. One move from the location in which you find yourself, and your lungs will likely be splattered everywhere, for you find yourself in a vacuum. And you cannot avoid passing through it to get into the game!

Hydropanics, and a caveman in a glass case will be awaiting your solution of the vacuum. From there on I have done a little manipulation, but not really progressed much further.

What is the hangar for? What is the true use of the flower?

I have had one letter from a reader who had completed the game, but resisted the temptation to ask for some tips, because every now and again I feel masochistic enough to have another session. And usually, I find out just a little bit more!

This one is definitely a game for the experienced Adventurer — and preferably with experience of the Scott Adams series.

Savage Island Part 2
From Adventure International for TRS-80, Video Genie, Apple, Atari and TI 99/4a. Various prices depending on micro.

Logic/Difficulty	**5**
Vocabulary	**5**
Plot/Theme	**5**

Keith Campbell

SAGA

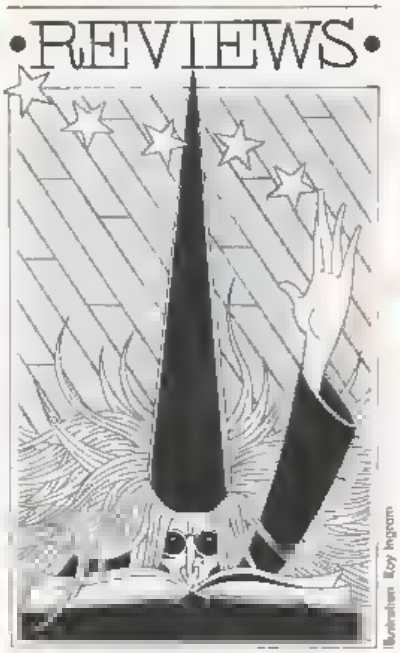
This is Scott Adams's classic first adventure — Adventureland — but with the added bonus of excellent hi-res colour graphics.

The plot is exactly the same, so anyone who has already completed the text Adventureland will not be interested in buying and playing the game again.

The version under review was played on an Atari 800 and the game came on two flappy discs. Booting the program proved no trouble at all, and while you have a short wait for all the information to be loaded in, you are treated to a very impressive title screen.

I won't go into too much detail on the plot as Keith covered it in an earlier issue's Adventure column, suffice to say that you must explore an enchanted world in search of the 13 lost treasures.

•REVIEWS•



SCOTT ADAMS

Saga Adventureland

Obviously the main attraction of this game is going to be its graphics, and therefore comparisons with games like 'The Hobbit' and 'The Dark Crystal' are inevitable. It beats the Hobbit hands down. The Dark Crystal is better graphically, but the storyline isn't as good.

The graphics were created by Scott's own graphic editor, which you can buy, and judging from Adventureland's graphics, I think that it could well be worth investing in. The graphics really are excellent and — although I do have a strong preference for text adventures — almost worth buying an Atari and disk drive for.

There is little in the way of animation, but this fact is not really noticed when playing. The graphics are switchable. This I feel is an excellent feature and it's a pity more companies don't do it.

The program comes in an extremely well made and attractive box, containing the two discs (in protective sleeves) and a small handbook. I was impressed by the quality of packaging and the box should ensure that the discs are well protected from knocks and dust.

Thanks to Microdeal for the review copy. This and the other SAGA's are available from them and their dealers.

Saga Adventureland from Adventure International for the Apple II 48K disc and Atari 48K disc. Price £28.99.

Difficulty/Logic	**5**
Vocabulary	**5**
Plot	**4**

Simon Clarke

THE COUNT

This is the title of a new and difficult game from Adventure International, intended only for the most persistent Adventurer.

Even Scott Adams himself admits that this is one of his favourites (see page 10), and they don't come more highly recommended than that!

Two small holes in your neck are the tell-tale clues to your peril when you awake in a strange bed in Adam's The Count.

From the brass bed, the adventure begins and continues through a spooky old castle which hides Count Dracula, and — just as important — a way to destroy him. It is not an easy task and will tax even the most hardened adventurer.

What makes this game really difficult is that you only have a certain number of days (three) to complete your mission and, in this game, the sequence of events has to be very carefully thought about. When the sun sets, you will find it quite dangerous without taking the necessary precautions that all good vampire hunters would take.

The Count dons his guise of a bat and flaps his way around the castle in search of a supple neck to chew — *yours!*

The game is exactly the same screen layout as other Adam's adventures but is the most frustrating of the bunch. I really wouldn't recommend it to anyone who hasn't got a lot of patience or enjoys a real challenge.

Despite being very frustrating and difficult to complete, it is an interesting game and one that will have you constantly returning to it to play it again, as opposed to giving up and returning it to the shelf to gather dust.

Nicely presented package and a bare minimum of instructions, reliably loading cassette, interesting game and challenging too.

The Count is available for a multitude of systems and differing prices accordingly to which machine you have.

The Count
From Adventure International for TRS-80, Video Genie, Apple, Atari and TI 99/4a and Vic-20. Various prices.

Logic/Difficulty	**5**
Vocabulary	**4**
Plot	**5**

Simon Clarke

GOLDEN APPLE

The Artic Adventures A to D have a wide following among Spectrum and ZX owners, possibly because they were among the first in the field for the Spectrum. It was with interest that I took the plunge into *Golden Apple*, next in the Artic series.

Golden Apple is quite different from the *Ship of Doom Espronage Island* format. To start with, it is displayed as coloured text on a black background — giving it a different look from the black on yellow of the others.

Secondly, it is treasure-orientated rather than mission-orientated, except that to complete the game you must find the Apple.

Something about the game struck me as familiar. The instructions mention that the computer will be your puppet, and that you must collect and store 13 treasures.

When I reached a place telling me to drop treasures and type SCORE, I did, and was rewarded with the reply "You have stored 1 treasure. On a scale of 0 to 100 that rates 8". Now where have I seen that before?

A coincidence, no doubt. After all, if an infinite number of Adventure programmers write an infinite number of adventure games.. !

The game had a fast response, and a number of single key commands made moving around simple and quick.

Unfortunately, there seemed to be no identifiable theme to the game. The treasures I did find seemed to give themselves up fairly easily, and for no apparent reason.

Who would suspect that a Silver Bar was lurking in a log, and would reveal itself when the log was chopped? And would you really expect to find an axe up a tree?

No — any similarity in wording to other Adventures is not reflected in brilliance of plot.

My verdict? Well written and worded, and pleasant to play, although lacking in artistry. Not necessarily quick to complete, but easy to get in to, and therefore perhaps a useful and rewarding Adventure for the novice.

Golden Apple
From Artic Computing for the 48k Spectrum @ £6.95 and 16k ZX81 @ £5.95

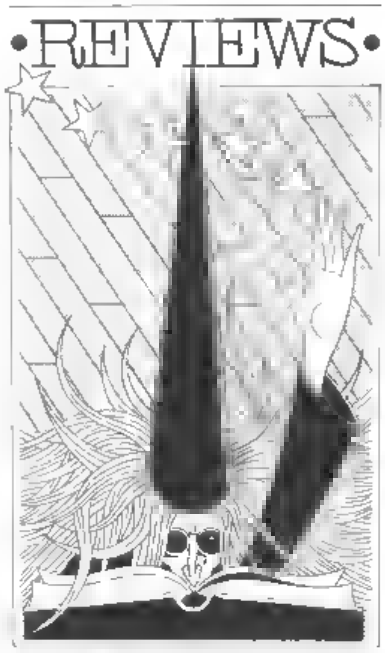
Logic/Difficulty	**3**
Vocabulary	**4**
Plot	**5**

Keith Campbell

LEOPARD LORD

There are mediocre Adventures and bad Adventures, but *Leopard Lord* from Kayde Software has that little something less that makes it one of the most awful I have had the misfortune to come across. Sounds bad doesn't it!

Valhalla. More details on this exciting game in the next issue's Adventure column.



FANTASY

It loads on a 48k Spectrum under plain cover, and stops — so you have to press RUN. You may soon wish you hadn't. If you ask for instructions, you learn that "THE PEOPLEOF YARM HAVE OFFERED 1000 GOLD COINS TO RID THEM OF FORDEL, THE EVIL WIZARD". Who was this strange "Peopleof" I wondered.

You find yourself in a gloomy forest, and in so doing are treated to your first sight of *Leopard Lord's* tiring screen display.

The initial screen, displayed on a white background, gives details of location, exits, and objects.

These are well spaced out, exits and objects appearing in columns rather than rows. After each command the screen scrolls to redisplay, and as the display height is about ¾ screen height, the eyes soon tire of watching the screen and trying to decide where the new information starts. Another tiring feature is that commands must be entered as full words — no abbreviations allowed.

After a while, my eyes feeling like a reel on a one-arm bandit, I decided to BREAK and put in a CLS statement before the display. All was then revealed!

Not the key to the game, but the lack of care, thought, and expertise put into the program. As I suspected, the program was as sloppy as "PEOPLEOF".

A further look at the listing gave me the impression that whoever wrote it had not heard of a subroutine. Many lines read PRINT "YOU CAN'T". GOTO 20. There were countless repeated FOR/NEXT loops, and the Spectrum's missing ON × GOTO statement was overcome in an inefficient way. The vocabulary, directly assigned variables, was minimal. I got the impression that tightly written, this program could have fitted a 16k Spectrum. 16k owners are lucky to be spared!

The warning is there for everyone in Cleveland. Don't go blackberry picking in Yarm — or the deadly "Peopleof Hedgerow" will get you! And to friends and readers everywhere — don't even bother to pirate *Leopard Lord!*

Leopard Lord
From Kayde Software for the 48k Spectrum @ £5.95

Logic/Difficulty	**0**
Vocabulary	**1**
Plot	**1**

Keith Campbell

OCEAN HUNT

Epic Hero is the title of a series of machine-code adventures for the 16k TRS-80.

Deciding to start at the beginning, I tried my hand at the first *Epic*, entitled *Ocean Hunt*. Here, the player starts off by a wharf and boat, and the opening ploys are reminiscent of *Golden Voyage*. Moving on, the boat can be sailed to an island, complete with native woman — *(Espronage Island* without beads?) The furnishings of a cave give the feeling that here is a cross between *Savage Island* and *Mystery Fun House*.

Having got that off my chest, I must mention that there are other scenarios. And there are some unusual objects lying around that seem to have unusual uses!

What I found a little irksome was death without warning. OK, anyone venturing into a mouth could expect to get eaten — but being stabbed by the native woman for one's good looks seemed a little illogical!

I would summarise *Ocean Hunt* as "the mixture as before". If you like the mixture, then the chances are you'll enjoy this one!

Epic Hero 1 — Ocean Hunt
From Molimerx for TRS-80, Video Genie @ £10.06.

Logic/Difficulty	**4**
Vocabulary	**4**
Plot	**3**

Keith Campbell

Continued on page 24

GRAPHICS

ASYLUM II

"No! I won't do it! Never never never! I'm only just recovering from my full frontal lobotomy and I've managed to keep my hand-grenade and there's no way you're going to get me in **there**! Nooooooooo.. .... ."

Try as I might, I could not persuade Keith to enter the Asylum again. He even refused when I offered to tell him how to get to Egypt in 'Temple of Bast'. So with the sour knowledge that I could get no further in Asylum I, I entered Asylum II!

After the initial escape from the first cell and wandering around a while, I soon saw that not only had the author kept his very high standard of graphics, he'd improved them! Full 3D graphics depict the corridors and cells, offices, operating theatres, mazes and pay-phones.

With all the hi-res colour machines around these days it is easy to shrug-off such terms as '3D graphics', but remember, the Tandy is black & white, with almost nothing in the way of graphics — Asylum II's graphics are better than most games around for machines like the BBC, Atari and Spectrum.

Anyone that has played Asylum I will be pleased to hear that Asylum II is easier to get into, but is still an extremely hard game to solve.

Having solved Asylum's predecessors, Labyrinth and Deathmaze 5000, I was upset at not being able to complete Asylum II in the six months I have been playing it. But it is easy to wander round, you can flit back and forth from one problem to another, and this program is not short of surprises, so you won't get bored.

If you are considering trying an Asylum, the second would be the better to start off with as they aren't in any sequence. Asylum II is also very easy to map — apart from the mind-bending task of trying to draw a 6-sided square. "You can come out now Keith, I've finished" I never knew a man that size could fit under such a small table!

Asylum II from Microdeal for the TRS-80. Price £12.

● Logic/Difficulty	5
● Vocabulary	5
● Plot	5

Simon Clarke

MAD MARTHA II

After Mad Martha it was with great interest that I sat and waited for Mad Martha II to load into my Spectrum.

After a meaningless burst of flashing screens and unpleasant beeps you are asked your name, a trifle odd, as you are supposed to be taking the part of Martha's husband, Henry.

After answering, you are asked to select your skill level (1, 2 or 3), and this sets just how much time you have for your night-on-the-tiles.

More flashes and beeps and you are seated at a table on the beach, with the glorious Spanish sun blazing down.

The waiter appears and hands you a scented letter and you are treated to a short rendition of *Viva Espana*. The picture was quite nicely done and the music was very impressive indeed and a nice mood setter.

From then on, the game falls short of expectations.

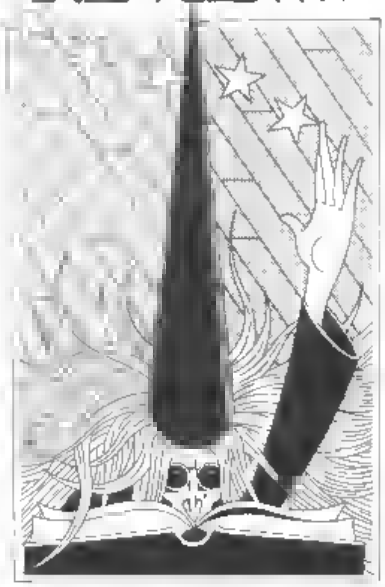
When all the many bugs are ironed out, this may well be a passable game, providing you're deaf, have less than seven brain-cells, and the I.Q. level of a concussed bee!

Mad Martha II from Microgen for 48K Spectrum. Price £6.95.

● Logic/Difficulty	1
● Vocabulary	1
● Plot	3

Simon Clarke

•REVIEWS•



CONTINUED

FANTASY

WONDERLAND

This game has sat on my software shelf for some time now, gathering dust — the mere thought of it sent me to sleep.

As I had both machines on the same desk and a separate TV for each, coupled with the fact I had a couple of hours spare while my car was worked on, I reluctantly loaded the Beeb and TRS-80 versions into their respective machines.

Loading was no problem on either machine and after a relatively short wait, I was off. The two versions appeared to be identical, although it soon became obvious that the BBC version's response time was much quicker.

So, it is possible that this game could overcome my pre-judgement of it? YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT!!

This game has probably the best plot I have ever come across. The various little tasks of the game are all based on nursery rhymes, but believe me, this is not a game for little children — it's hard! The responses are chatty and amusing and the location descriptions are very atmospheric. The object of the game is to recover treasure (what else! I bet your cupboards must be packed with gold and jewels by now!) and each treasure can only be gained if you apply the logic formed from the old rhymes. That was probably the hardest part for me, I never was very good at remembering nursery rhymes. I wonder what type of mentality the author has?

So wonderland gets a thumbs up, and the prize for the most misleading blurb goes to Malmerx of Sussex. You can get the game from them, but don't read their description or you might be put off an excellent game!

● Logic/Difficulty	5
● Vocabulary	3
● Plot	5

Simon Clarke

SCI-FI

PULSAR 7

This is the fifth in the Mysterious Adventures series and is loosely based on the box office smash hit horror film *Alien*.

After delivering some Redinium ore to a nearby planet, you are heading for home, complete with a playful little creature, for Earth's intergalactic Zoo.

But the creature escapes, plays in the remains of the ore and turns into a savage and bloodthirsty beast, devouring the rest of the crew.

You must find your way to the frail shuttle-craft and escape.

It is difficult to solve — I managed to complete it in one sitting, starting at 6 o'clock one evening and finishing at 3am the following morning.

I played the game on a TRS-80 as my Spectrum version had not yet come through. The Tandy version is text based, where most of the others, including the Spectrum, have graphics.

The program does have a large vocabulary and the response times are almost instant! I rate this game as one of the best in the series (second only to Circus). It is difficult in places and I wouldn't recommend it for a novice.

Escape from Pulsar 7 from Digital Fantasia for the 48K Spectrum, BBC, Atari, Commodore 64, Dragon 32 TRS-80, Colour Genie. Price varies depending on the machine.

● Difficulty/Logic	5
● Vocabulary	5
● Plot	5

FANTASY GAMING

Adventures appeal to the escapist in us, who yearn to roam fantastic worlds unfettered by the conventions and restrictions of society.

Instead of being accused of living in a dream world, adventures let you enter someone else's dream and blunder against its boundaries as you learn to thrive within it.

The most successful adventures are more than logic puzzles and exercises in lateral thinking, they contain a well-worked plot, surprises and interesting characters. To enjoy an adventure it is important to be able to believe in it.

There are many other ways that games can take the player into a fantasy world where he must use his wits to play and win. Here Terry Pratt looks at a few.

There is a network of gamers spread all over Britain who play computer games without ever setting hand on the infernal machines

They claim to be Starlords, to control whole tribes of warring nations or to be berserkers, space pirates or apostles.

These then are the computer moderated gamers, whose past can hold news of intergalactic holocaust, petty treachery or pleas to unite against a stronger foe

The games are played by post with the players sending off orders for their fleets, tribes or armies which are fed into a computer and the machine correlates all the information and works out the outcome

This is returned to the players who can then see how their efforts fared and whether they were double-crossed by their allies, routed by their enemies or had run the entire fleet into a planet they didn't know existed.

But the reading of the latest reports and compiling of orders is only a small part of the game The battles are usually won or lost in the rounds of hectic negotiating and bartering over the phone with opposing players.

Double crosses, threats and unholy alliances are all part and parcel of the game. But there is also a camaraderie built up between the players as between 10 to 50 can take part in any one game.

The games cost around £1-£2 a turn and a few of the most popular are Starlord, Tribes of Crane and Starweb.

If you want to enjoy adventuring without the necessary inflexibility of computers then you have to look to fantasy role playing.

The original and most successful fantasy role-playing game is Dungeons and Dragons. The game is played by an alter ego Each player assumes a character thief, fighter, wizard or cleric; and a race. elf, dwarf, halfling or human

The choice of character is narrowed down by first throwing dice to discover six attributes, Dexterity, Strength, Charisma, Intelligence, Wisdom and Constitution Each attribute helps to form the character and a seventh throw equips him through a starting amount of gold pieces

With these he buys armour, weapons, potions and supplies and he then sets out to begin adventuring

This is just the prelude to the game which involves several players, each representing one such character, delving into a dungeon which has been designed by a referee or dungeon master

Guided by a book of rules, he has invented a dungeon of many levels which features monsters, villains, victims and treasures. The players act together to defeat as many monsters and earn as much treasure as they can before escaping with their lives intact.

Each monster killed and treasure gained, results in experience points which helps the character become stronger and more capable Wizards cast spells, fighters wield swords, thieves climb and sneak and clerics heal and ward-off the undead.

A successful party should be well balanced with all characters and well equipped. They should also have the wit and imagination to react quickly to all that the dungeon master has ready to throw at them

There are many other types of fantasy role-playing games but all feature a book of rules for the worlds, treasures and monsters and a set of dice to decide all conflicts and other decisions according to carefully worked out tables.

The games do not pit one player against another but encourage teamwork and even the dungeon master is not expected to kill the party, merely to create an entertaining adventure which challenges without over-whelming the party

A great time can be had by all as you take on the role of a wizard or an orc and let your hair down!.

Other role-playing games include Runequest, Traveller and games like Bunnies and Burrows — a kind of adventure Watership Down.

HUNT WINS GRAND PRIX

At yesterday's Monaco Grand Prix a hunting party drayed onto the track at the climax of the race. Cars were halted as the hounds rampaged around the circuit. The whole place has gone to the dogs, one driver was reported as saying. The race was restarted riders and drivers battled bitterly around the course before the Hunt thundered past the finishing line to take the chequered flag (it hasn't been seen since).

PLAYER WINS OPEN

Eagle eyed spectators were privileged to see player score at bodie at fifteenth. Th...

Salamander SOFTWARE GSH

PRIVATE DETECTIVE DISAPPEARS

Police are baffled by the disappearance of Dan Diamond. He was last seen approaching the seriously known as Franklin's Tomb, but the authorities are completely unable to find any trace of him. Citizens are asked to report any information relating to his disappearance immediately. For further details [illegible] FRANKLINS TOMB [illegible] MODEL B DRAGON [illegible] This adventure comes complete with [illegible] from BUGS SPECTRUM COMPUTERS FOR ALL WEBSTERS and [illegible]

BANANA DICTATOR SLIPS UP

[illegible] Turo dictator of [illegible]

2 DEAD IN EVEREST TRAGEDY

The Everest Expedition ended in tragedy [illegible] as Carl and Fred plunged down a crevice to a grisly death. [illegible] the expedition lead was spoiled as [illegible] Yuk Commandeurpa

COLD WAR ON XARG ESCALA

Thousands dead in Ice Storm

Mackinas the Mo[illegible] said yesterday [illegible]

DRAGONFIRE

Dragonfire rushed on to the adventure game scene earlier in the year amidst a blaze of television advertising.

The game is a very simple one and, despite involving dragons, a castle and a young prince it owes more to the shoot 'em up style of game than to a strategy adventure.

You have to run across the castle drawbridge ducking to avoid the balls of fire being hurled from within the walls of the castle

Once safely over the drawbridge you find yourself in the treasure room surrounded by glittering goblets, candelabras, lamps, urns, and pieces of gold.

The only other slightly complicating factor which I ought to explain is that each room contains an enraged fire breathing dragon.

The game is one of Imagic's best offerings this year for the Atari VCS and now also available on the Intellivision

Theme	**4**
Graphics	**4**
Playability	**3**

E.T.

The second Spielberg adventure game — based on the blockbusting movie E.T. is every bit as difficult as Raiders but does not reach the same high standards.

The plot sticks very closely to that of the film you have to help the little alien assembled his intergalactic telephone.

The various bits of ET's phone are hidden around the four screens of the game. When you find a piece it is collected by making contact with it

Once he has assembled the phone ET has to go to the forest and call up his alien friends — who will then beam down from the stars and rescue him.

Two other characters floating around in the game can often fleece ET of the various bits of his phone, and in the case of the FBI man, cart him off to jail

Also after our little alien is a scientist who wants to experiment on him.

This game suffered from being rushed out to coincide with the film release.

You may love ET but there are far better adventure games available for your VCS than this

Theme	**4**
Graphics	**3**
Playability	**2**

PITFALL

The hit adventure game of all time on the video games systems is undoubtedly Activision's Pitfall.

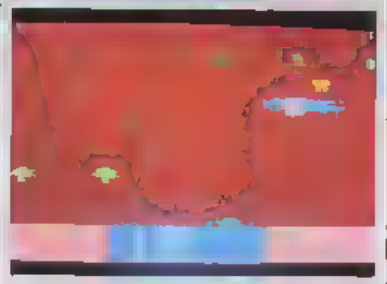
Another treasure seeking game with obstacles on route. You are Pitfall Harry running from left to right across the screen leaping over crocodiles, swinging from ropes, and dodging scorpians as the jungle background scrolls by.

Pitfall is a race against the clock as well as a challenge to overcome the enemies encountered as you run.

Solutions to Pitfall are as plentiful as cures for the common cold. I just can't get enough of this game.

Theme	**3**
Graphics	**4**
Playability	**5**

Dragonfire



Dragonstomper

Treasures of Tarmin

Video games adventures are a different type of game to computer adventures — though no less popular. The main difference is that all the action on screen is controlled by the player's joystick. There is no keyboard for typing in sentences of possible solutions — though in the case of the Intellivision and ColecoVision the keypad will enable the player to select certain options. Here we bring you reviews of some of the more successful video game adventures.

TARMIN

The best selling games on the Intellivision are its series of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons games.

The latest of these is the three dimensional maze challenge — Treasures of Tarmin.

Deep inside the island fortress of Tarmin lies the priceless treasure guarded for centuries by the forces of evil.

To recover the treasure you must avoid being killed by the monsters who inhabit the corridors

As you travel you will find certain artifacts dotted around the corridors which you will find useful

This is a challenging adventure game where you have to plan your route very carefully. A must for D&D fans.

Theme	**3**
Graphics	**4**
Playability	**4**

RAIDERS

This time last year just about every game coming out of Sunnyvale was an adventure — Stephen Spielberg's licensed titles prominent amongst them.

Raiders of the Last Ark is one of the toughest VCS adventures ever and has resulted in many a gamer tearing his hair out to late into the small hours.

You play the part of Indiana Jones intrepid archaeologist and explorer in his quest for the Last Ark of the Covenant.

The game is played using two joysticks — one to move Indy around the screen and the other to select the items which he needs at certain points in the game.

No less than thirteen screens of action and dozens of artifacts to be chosen at the correct time make Raiders a considerable intellectual puzzle

A challenging game for around £20.00

Theme	**5**
Graphics	**4**
Playability	**4**

DRAGONSTOMPER

The biggest adventure ever written for a video games system is Starpath's Dragonstomper

The game runs in conjunction with the Supercharger which enables the game to be fed into the VCS from cassette tape in three parts. You wander a mystic land under the evil spell of a Dragon who has the countryside gripped in a reign of terror.

The Supercharger gives this adventure the feel and play value of a more complex computer adventure game

Theme	**4**
Graphics	**3**
Playability	**4**

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He then presents a complete program listing, and explains the intricacies of creating an adventure game, including devising a plot, creating the environment and screen presentation.

Add to all of this, a clear explanation of programming techniques which will show you how to introduce objects, control space and time, interpret English input, move your player from one location to another and many more exciting skills.

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